

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the foregoing chapter, a literature review on HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in schools of the North West Province and the role of the principal regarding the management of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes was presented. It stated that the principal has to perform different roles in order to manage HIV/AIDS awareness programmes.

This chapter sets out the methodology and design of the investigation and data collecting methods of the researcher. Chapter one (cf 1.9.1) states that the qualitative method is used in this study and the researcher explores this method in depth. The researcher also includes the criteria for the selection of participants and describes the procedures for conducting the research.

The objectives of the research described in this chapter is to investigate how the principal and educators manage HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in the North West Province schools and the perspectives and experiences of learners of these programmes.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Qualitative research

Strauss and Corbin (1990:17) state that qualitative research is any kind of research that provides results not arrived at by means of numbers. Shimahara (1988:80) agrees and adds that qualitative research produces findings that cannot be obtained by means of statistical procedures or any other means of qualifications.

Smith (1987:174) suggests that qualitative research is founded upon the concept of *verstehen* which refers to the understanding of social events from the participants point of view. This process of *verstehen* includes the need to relive the experiences of others within the researcher (Smith 1987:7). Strauss and Corbin (1990:17) further indicate that qualitative research refers to the research about people's lives, beliefs and behaviour. Likewise Fraekel and Wallen (1990:367) adds that qualitative research is concerned about the quality of a particular activity rather than how often it occurs. Thus the qualitative research method is appropriate in this study since the aim is to determine the management of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in secondary schools in the North West Province and the experiences and perceptions of learners of these programmes.

According to Creswell (1994:147) qualitative research is used in natural settings where human behaviour and events occur naturally. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:14) assert that qualitative research is underpinned by the following.

- **The assumption of the world**

Qualitative research is based on a naturalistic approach which assumes that the different realities are socially built by individuals through their experiences of the situation. In this study the principals, educators' and learners' views and experiences of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes are taken into consideration.

- **The research purpose**

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social events from the participants' view. The principals and educators were interviewed to obtain knowledge of the HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. Learners wrote about their perceptions and experiences of such programmes.

- **Research method and process**

In qualitative research both the method and the process are flexible. Thus the researcher does not enter the research site with a rigid plan and procedure for the research, but can adapt the interview schedule, the number of participants and the length of the research as the need arises.

- **The importance of the context in the study**

The researcher believes that human actions are strongly influenced by the setting in which they occur. Leedy and Ormrod (1985:147) state that qualitative research has two things in common:

- They focus on events that occur in natural settings.
- They involve the study of those events completely.

In this study, the context, namely the North West Province is taken into consideration. Likewise, the context of each school is also noted. Bogdan and Biklin (1992:29) agree with the above and state that qualitative research has five features which are:

- qualitative research takes place in a natural setting.
- qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected is in the form of words rather than numbers.
- qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than with products.
- qualitative researchers analyse their data logically. The ideas are built as the participants are interviewed.
- meaning is an essential concern to the qualitative approach.

These five features are essential to the study because they provide a framework for the researcher to collect data from the participants (Patton 1990:59).

According to Hammersley (2000:2) there are five advantages of using a qualitative research methodology:

- The appreciative capacity: explains the notion of appreciation in qualitative research which requires that people's behaviour be understood as making sense within the context in which it occurs. In this study the capacity to appreciate people's behaviour within the context is a valuable choice of research methodology.
- The designatory capacity: in qualitative research refers to the researcher's ability to capture and present data as distinctly as possible. In this study the designatory capacity provides the researcher with an opportunity to be close to the participants so that he/she can capture and present data as distinctly as possible.
- The reflective capacity: in qualitative research refers to the introspection a researcher makes before, during and after the research to find solutions to the problems in his/her research (Hammersley 2000:3). The researcher in this study views the reflective capacity as vital because it enables her to reflect on issues that are vital in qualitative research.
- Relevance to policy making and practice. According to Hammersley (2000:5) qualitative research can provide valuable data to improve educational policies and practice because the research methodology is designed to develop 'bottom up' abstractions and observations.
- The corrective capacity in qualitative research refers to the ability of the research methodology to inform and shape existing perceptions of practitioners and policymakers at micro and macro levels in education (Hammersley 2000:3).

The above advantages are relevant to this research and contribute towards validating the choice of methodology.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

According to Creswell (1994:148) there are steps which the researcher should take into consideration in data collecting namely:

- stipulating the area where data will be collected.
- collecting data and establishing ways of recording data. Van Dalen (1978:42) adds that there are different ways of collecting data in qualitative research. These are:
 - The use of an interview guide which must be carefully structured because they strengthen the researcher's interview.
 - In depth interviews which capture the direct words spoken by the participants regarding their experience, feelings and knowledge of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes.
 - Direct observation which consists of detailed descriptions of what the researcher observes during interview.

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:43) are of the same opinion that there are different qualitative techniques that can be used to produce verbal descriptions able to capture the richness and different aspects of behaviour that takes place in natural settings from the participants' view. Glesne and Peskin (1992:25) advise that the researcher should choose research methods that are likely to elicit data needed to gain understanding of the events in question. This will enable the researcher to elicit more information from the participants.

For the purpose of this study, individual interview and focus group interviews were used. In addition learners were asked to write essays in response to questions about HIV/AIDS awareness programmes.

In collecting data, the researcher should consider four parameters:

- The settings where the research will take place.

- Participants who will be interviewed.
- What the participants will be interviewed about.
- How the participants will be interviewed.

Thus, Taylor and Bogdan (1984:2) comment that in qualitative research the researcher tries to understand the reasons and beliefs behind the words of the participants. Furthermore, Borg and Gall (1989:24) add that it is during the interaction of the researcher and the participants that data are collected.

3.3.1 Interviews

3.3.1.1 *Individual interview*

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:104), an interview involves direct personal contact with participants who are asked to respond to the questions relating to the research problem. The wealth and quality of data collection depends on the skills of the researcher and the confidence inspired in participants.

Interviewing is a well established method of data collection (Ary et al 1979:174). Interviewing involves direct personal contact with the participants. The researcher asks the participants questions relating to HIV/AIDS awareness programmes and the participants respond to the questions (Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:101).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (1985:200), interviewing involves much more than asking questions. The questions are well planned and carefully worded to yield the kind of data the researcher needs to answer the research questions.

Bogdan and Biklin (1982:135) state that interviewing both individuals and focus groups involves a purposeful dialogue between two or more people directed by the research in order to get information. Furthermore, Bogdan and Biklin (1982:135) state that in qualitative research interviews may be used in two ways:

- as the main technique for collecting data; or
- in addition to observation of the participants.

In all these situations, interviewing is used to gather data in the form of the participants' own words, so that the researcher can gain insight in the way in which the participants interpret their current world.

Qualitative researchers selectively choose persons most likely to yield information-rich data about the anticipated problem (McMillan & Schumacher 1994:413). In this study three principals from three different schools were chosen to elicit data. Through interviews they were able to give rich information about their schools. School principals are regarded as key-informants because they are in charge of their respective schools. As heads of these institutions they know what is happening in these institutions. Educators too are regarded as having information about HIV/AIDS awareness programmes because they participate in the programme in their perspective classes.

Principals from three different schools were interviewed individually because according to Van Dalen (1978:158) people can provide information willingly and fully in such interviews. The auditory and visual cues during the interview helps the researcher to have a feeling of the private conversation so as to elicit personal and confidential information and gain knowledge about the feelings, attitudes and motivations of the participants (Van Dalen 1979:158).

The individual principals will be interviewed in a private setting so that they can feel free to express themselves fully (Van Dalen 1979:158). The rapport established with the principals provides for a cooperative atmosphere in which truthful information can be obtained (Ary et al 1979:174).

3.3.1.2 *Focus group interview*

A focus group consists of three to four respondents who are interviewed together (Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:110).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:432), the researcher can vary his/her interaction style. In this study a focus group interview was undertaken to obtain better understanding of the problem. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:432) add that a focus group interview creates a social environment in which group members are stimulated by each other's ideas.

Patton (1990:335) comments that focus group interviews are used to elicit data from a small group of people on a specific topic. Furthermore, Bogdan and Biklin (1992:100) postulate that focus group interviews are a useful way of gaining insight about what to pursue in individual interviews. Krueger (1997:19) agrees that the focus group interviews present a natural setting which is similar to a real life situation where participants influence each other.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:110) states the following advantages of using focus groups.

- The participants are able to discuss the issue in question with each other.
- A focus group provides an opportunity for participants to learn from each other.
- One person's idea may set off a whole string of related thoughts and ideas in another person.

Many African cultures make constant use of small groups which are described as a *lekgotlha* or *indaba* (discussion groups) to address concerns within the community. For this reason the group focus method of data collection may turn out to be extremely comfortable for many people within African cultures and may be the method of choice for them.

Different viewpoints are obtained through focus group interviews when qualified educators who share the common background, are brought together to explore a problem (Van Dalen 1978:159). In this research three educators from each school were selected to form a focus group. All interviews were audio-taped with the group's permission.

A protocol is useful in conducting interviews. The protocol is composed of the following:

- interview schedule for both principals and educators;
- instructions on how to go about with the interview;
- research questions to be asked;
- the space for recording the interview (Creswell 1994:152).

The researcher designs the protocol by outlining the time, place and date that described the settings where the interview will take place. Interviews are usually audio-taped. The research also takes notes to supplement the audio-tapes. The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in the minds of the participants (Patton 1990:278).

3.3.2 Written texts

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:453) suggest that in qualitative research, the researcher should think of the primary source that would yield information to the topic. The primary source can include the written and oral testimony of eyewitnesses. In this study, the tenth grade learners in one school were asked to write an essay of one to two A4 pages in response to the following key questions:

- What is your opinion of the HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in your school?
- What else should the school be doing to support learners affected by HIV/AIDS?

The questions are formulated to elicit free expression of personal feelings on the topic. The written responses are considered first hand personal experiences and beliefs about HIV/AIDS. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:434) and Blase and Blase (1999:356) add that the written responses are primary sources of data collection because they focus on a single topic and can be readily assembled for analysis. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:453) further add that the primary source is original in the sense that it contains first-hand information of the events.

Thus, learners are able to express their feelings, opinions, emotions, fears and hopes on HIV/AIDS awareness programmes without being identified.

3.4 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

Glensner and Peshkin (1992:25) are of the opinion that the researcher needs to clearly define his/her role. Creswell (1994:163) adds that in qualitative research, the role of the researcher as the primary data collector is necessary for the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the beginning of the study. Ary et al (1979:447) agree that the researcher is a data collecting instrument.

According to Measor (1995:57), the researcher is a learner who is curious to learn from the participants. As a learner he/she listens to the participants and builds a relationship of trust and respect. Thus, the researcher interacts with the participants in their everyday lives. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:15) agree that in qualitative research, the researcher becomes involved in the situation while interviewing and recording what the participants share. Glenser and Peshkin (1992:36) further add that the researcher becomes engaged in an interaction by meeting the participants face to face to obtain information that could not be transmitted in written replies to questions.

The researcher in this study is an educator who interacts with the principals, educators and learners on an ongoing basis at the school. By taking part in everyday events, the researcher is able to approach the school with the assumption that everything is important for the understanding of what is being studied (Bogdan & Biklin 1982:28). In this way the researcher does not allow her own values to influence the result of the research under investigation (Smith 1987:174). Hoberg (1999:51) confirms that the role of the researcher is to understand human events and the meaning behind these as experienced by the participants in their everyday lives.

3.4.1 Interview guide

According to Patton (1990:283) the interview guide is a list of questions that are to be examined thoroughly during the course of an interview. Creswell (1990:70) adds that these questions are created in order not to limit the research but are topics to be explored in interviews. Thomas (1993:35) agrees that the interview guide includes key questions that the researcher asks the interviewee during an interview. Thus, the questions become working guidelines rather than truths to be proved. Patton (1990:283) lists the following advantages of an interview guide:

- It ensures that the interviewer uses the limited time in an interview situation optimally.
- It helps make interviewing of a number of participants systematic and understandable.
- It is useful during focus group interviews.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:447), the interview guide includes the topics chosen by the researcher before the actual interview. However, during the interview the researcher decides the sequence of, and the exact wording of the questions.

Babbie (1995:264) adds that the researcher must fit into the ideal situation and not let his/her presence affect the participants' perceptions of the question. The researcher should be a natural medium through which questions and answers are transmitted. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:38) see the task of the researcher as acting as an observer and communicating the analysis of the observation to others by interviewing the participants. The researcher attempts to understand the complex behaviour of the members of society without imposing any obstacle that will hinder and limit the field of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:653).

In this study the interview guides were used to guide the researcher during individual and focus group interviews, but did not dictate the interview. Thus, participants were free to raise issues or explore questions not included in the interview guide.

3.4.2 Reliability and validity

According to Ary et al (1979:196) there are two important characteristics that every measuring instrument should present: validity and reliability.

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The researcher needs to assess to what extent the measuring instrument measures exactly what it intends to measure.

Reliability is the extent to which a measuring instrument is consistent in measuring what it intends to measure. Ary et al (1979:196) and Van Niekerk (1991:125) say that reliability is the extent to which observable measures that represent theoretical concepts are accurate and constant when used in educational studies. Miles and Huberman (1994:38) add that in qualitative research issues, validity and reliability are closely linked to the skills of the researcher.

Shimahara (1988:87) argues that to enhance reliability the researcher should provide a complete description of the research process, so that other researchers may reproduce the same procedures in similar settings. However, Patton (1990:11) suggests that validity and reliability of qualitative data depends on the whole on the methodology, skills and integrity of the researcher. Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (1993:232) contend that reliability is a necessary condition for validity. Therefore, if a researcher's data is not obtained with valid and reliable instruments, there would be doubts regarding the results obtained. Ary et al (1979:196) conclude that the evidence of validity and reliability is of particular importance in educational research because most of the measured data are obtained from individual interview and focus group interviews.

3.5 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to the plan and structure used to obtain information relating to the research question. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:31), Booyse et al (1996:99) and De Vos et al (1996:77) assert that a researcher's design is a detailed plan which guides the way in which research is conducted. Bogdan and Biklin (1982:55) argue that the design of the

research refers to the plan of how to proceed in the investigation. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:31) reiterate that the research design is a very important part of an investigation since certain limitations and cautions in interpreting the results are related to the design and also because the design determines how the data should be analysed.

The research design regarding the study is exploratory and descriptive.

- **Exploratory**

Simelane (1998:12) says that the nature of qualitative research is oriented towards exploration. A qualitative approach that is exploratory enables the researcher to share in the understanding and perceptions of participants and also allows him/her to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Therefore, this study is exploratory in that it attempts to understand the management of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in secondary schools in the North West Province. The researcher explored through interviews how principals and educators manage HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in their schools and classrooms. Written reports describe the perceptions of learners.

- **Descriptive**

Simelane (1998:13) is of the opinion that a descriptive study provides a detailed description of an event under study. In this study the principal and educators described in an accurate manner how they manage HIV/AIDS awareness programmes, and the learners revealed their perceptions of these programmes.

3.5.1 Status of the researcher

The researcher's social relationship with the participants is important to this study (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:386). The researcher is an educator in a school in the district of Bapong.

Currently she is the head of department (HOD) of life orientation. This places her in a good position to gain information about HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. The researcher in this regard is a learner to the extent that she is ready to listen to the opinion, ideas, beliefs and fears of the participants during the interview. Notwithstanding her role, the researcher endeavoured not to allow her views to disturb the information she received while conducting interviews.

3.5.2 The language issue

The researcher is Zulu speaking by birth, but is conversant with the local language of the community which is Tswana. She has been with the community more than ten years and is familiar with local conditions. Hence the participants took part in the research with confidence. The interviews were conducted in English. However, at times phrases had to be explained in Tswana.

3.5.3 Rationale for doing research in Bapong

Chapter 1 (cf 1.6) states clearly the reason for conducting the research in Bapong and for choosing grade ten in one school to provide data on the views of learners of the HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. Briefly the decision was prompted by the following considerations:

- There is no cure for AIDS and the only way to combat the disease is to limit the spread of the disease. This can be achieved by making learners aware of HIV/AIDS.
- Adolescents often consider themselves to be immortal and the lengthy period between infection with HIV and the appearance of the symptoms of AIDS may give them a false sense of invulnerability.

- Newspapers continually carry stories on the increasing threat of HIV/AIDS to the social fabric of South Africa.
- The number of absentees from schools of both educators and learners is increasing. This is thought to be due to illnesses associated with HIV/AIDS.

In addition, the Department of Education is concerned about the management of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in schools and its effect, hence this study.

HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in schools are a burning issue as educators and learners became infected, often due to inadequate information on HIV/AIDS. This lack of information is exacerbated by the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS particularly in rural communities in developing countries. Many community beliefs about the disease and its transmission are misinformed. These misconceptions lead to prejudice, discrimination and exclusion.

3.5.4 Choice of schools

The three schools chosen are situated in the platinum mining area (cf 1). The researcher is familiar with these schools and interacts with the schools on a daily basis.

School A

School A is where the researcher is based and is supported by the Catholic church. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:416) indicate that the participant observer is a person who plays a role in the site in which he/she intends to conduct the study. In this study the participant interviewer is a co-educator in the school.

The school is a public school on private property and caters for children of different faiths. Congruent with legislation (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 1996:Section 5(i)) the school has an open admission policy. The governance structure is a school governing body with elected parents representatives. There are 689 learners in the school.

The school is surrounded by a fence and there is an alarm system. In spite of it the school has been broken into many times. There are 13 classrooms, an administration block, a library, laboratory hall with burglar proofing on the door and windows, telephone and fax machine (cf table 3.2). The classrooms are kept clean but there are many cracks in the walls and floor due to the mines. The toilets are clean. The cars are parked under the trees.

There is a tuck shop in the school yard, but during break time, many hawkers come into the school yard to sell bread, achaar and fish and chips. Some sell lunch packages. In spite of this, some learners and educators are allowed to go to the nearest shops to buy food.

Next to the school, there is a tavern which is also used as a shop. When the school finishes or during break time, music is played in the tavern very loudly and liquor is sold to learners regardless of their age.

The educators are of different nationalities, some from England, India, Ghana, Canada and the rest from South Africa. There are nine male educators including the principal and eight females.

The sports field is just opposite the school and is also used by the village people (cf Table 3.2).

School B

School B is a government school. There are 17 classrooms which are well cared for. The school has a toilet, laboratory, hall and an administration block. One of the classrooms is used as a library but the books are old and torn. There is a fax machine and telephone (cf Table 3.2). The school has fifteen computers, donated by the mines, which are used by learners.

Security at the school is good. There is an alarm system and a razor wire fence with one main gate. The tuck shop belongs to the school and a local woman has been hired to run it.

There are 28 educators and 998 learners. All educators live outside the village with the exception of one educator who lives in the village.

Outside the school people sell food to the learners during break time. There is a 'silver house' near the school, which acts as a restaurant for the educators and learners.

Water and electricity is supplied by the mines (cf Table 3.2).

School C

School C is also a government school. There are 852 learners and 26 educators. There are 12 regularly built classrooms and five tin shacks which are used as classrooms. The latter are hot in summer and cold in winter. The school has a telephone and a recently acquired fax machine. There are toilets but these are insufficient for the number of learners. There is a library which is not functioning. The school does not have a laboratory, sport fields or an administration block. There are two computers but learners are not allowed to use them.

Learners clean the classrooms on Fridays. During the week learners pick up the papers but have little time for anything else as they have to rush for buses and taxis after school.

TABLE 3.1: CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS

CHARACTERISTICS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
------------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

Medium of instructions	English	English	English
Number of learners	689	998	852
Number of educators	17	28	26
Number of classrooms	13	17	17
Administration staff	1	1	1
Head of Department	3	3	3
Principals	1	1	1
Deputy principal	1	1	1

TABLE 3.2: INFRASTRUCTURE AT SCHOOLS

	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
Telephone	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fax	Yes	Yes	Yes
Photocopier	Yes	Yes	Yes
Security of school	Yes	Yes	No
Library	Yes	Yes	Yes
Laboratory	Yes	Yes	No
Hall	Yes	Yes	No
Sports field	Yes	Yes	No
Toilets	Yes	Yes	Yes but insufficient
Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes
Water	Yes	Yes	

3.5.5 Choice of participants

Three principals were interviewed. Three educators from three different schools formed the focus groups, bringing the number to nine. Their characteristics and background are found in Tables 3.3 to 3.6

In School A, the three educators were selected because they are currently engaged in teaching life orientation and HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. Two are male and one female. The female educator has an honours degree in psychology and counsels learners in the school. She has been teaching for 19 years. One male educator has a BTech degree and is the head of the department of commerce. He has been teaching for nine years. The other male educator has a diploma in education. He is in charge of the sports in school, training learners and organising sports trips. He has been at this school for ten years.

In School B three educators were asked by the principal to volunteer for this study. The focus group was made up of two male and one female educators. The female educator has been teaching for 17 years and holds a diploma in education. Currently she is teaching life orientation and guidance in the school. One male educator is head of the department of life orientation. He has a diploma in education and has been in the teaching field for 13 years. The other male educator has a diploma in education and has been teaching for ten years.

In School C the principal was asked to be involved in the selection of three educators for interview. One female and two male were selected. The female educator has been teaching for 13 years and has a diploma in education. One male educator who has a diploma in education, have been teaching for 12 years and teach life orientation and biology.

The other male is head of the department of life orientation. He helps all the educators teaching life orientation. He has been teaching for ten years.

Of the three principals interviewed, the principal in School A has held the post for three years and has a BA degree. The principal in School B has been recently promoted (he was acting principal) and has a BEd degree. In School C, the principal has been principal in the school since it started ten years ago. He is currently studying for a masters degree in education at the University of Pretoria.

In total three principals and nine educators were interviewed.

TABLE 3.3: THE PRINCIPALS

PRINCIPALS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
Gender	Male	Male	Male
Age	53	50	51
Teaching experience: years	21	19	19
Years as principal	3	10	2
Marital status	Married	Married	Married
Residence	Morula View	Morula View	Ga-Rankuwa

TABLE 3.4: EDUCATORS IN SCHOOL A

EDUCATORS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
Gender	Female	Male	Male
Age	49	40	35
Teaching experience: years	19	10	9
Life orientation experience: years	1	1	1
Position held	Post level 1	Post level 1	HOD
Marital status	Divorce	Married	Married
Residence	Sonop	Lethabile	Morula View

TABLE 3.5: EDUCATORS IN SCHOOL B

EDUCATORS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

Gender	Female	Male	Male
Age	30	35	32
Teaching experience: years	17	13	10
Life orientation experience: years	6	6	6
Position held	Post level 1	Post level 1	HOD
Marital status	Married	Single	Married
Residence	Bapong	Morula View	Morula View

TABLE 3.6: EDUCATORS IN SCHOOL C

EDUCATORS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
Gender	Female	Male	Male
Age	30	29	29
Teaching experience: years	13	12	10
Marital status	Married	Married	Single
Life orientation experience: years	2	2	5
Position held	Post level 1	Post level 1	HOD
Residence	Morula View	Garankuwa	Letlhabile

The majority of the principals and educators fall within the age group of 29 to 53. The educators interviewed have many years of teaching experience but only School B educators have six years of experience in life orientation, the rest of the educators fall within one to five years.

The principal in School B has been principal for ten years. The principal in School A has been principal for three years and in School B, the principal was appointed a year ago.

The principals and all educators live outside the villages, they travel 90 km to come to school. Only one educator lives in the village where her school is situated. All the educators

and principals are married with the exception of two. One is still single, the other educator is divorced. There are two HOD the rest are post level 1 educators.

3.5.6 Choice of learners

According to Creswell (1994:148) the researcher selects participants who are able to answer the researcher's questions. Meason (1995:55) adds that one of the most important tasks of the researcher is the selection of the best participants for the study. Mason (2001:36) agrees with the suggestion that the best participants provide necessary data that can be generated for the study.

In this study the grade tens in one school, consisting of sixty four learners wrote an essay on their views and expectations of an HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in their school. The learners wrote the essay in English. 34 boys and 30 girls wrote the essays. Their age varies from 15 to 19.

The learners chose to write the essays on the last day of their November examination. The total number of essays received was sixty four. A sick learner who did not write most of the exams asked to write the essay. (See Appendix D).

3.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS AND BACKGROUND DATA

This section presents responses by participants which are related to personal characteristics.

3.6.1 The principal and teachers

Relevant background information which is needed to understand the participants' responses to questions are included in Table 3.3 through 3.6. All the principals are male. In each school there are one female educator and two male educators who were interviewed.

In preparation for the interview the researcher visited the three principals and ask permission to conduct an interview with them and the three educators. A letter in which official permission was sought was given to each of the three principals. (See Appendix E).

3.6.2 Interview of the principals and educators

3.6.2.1 *Individual interview with the principals*

The researcher conducted individual interviews with three secondary school principals where HIV/AIDS awareness programmes are taught. The researcher and the participants agreed on time, date and venue for the interview. The principals were interviewed in their office and because the exams were over, there was no interruptions. The setting provided for privacy and the principals were able to talk freely. During the interview use was made of an interview schedule (cf Appendix A).

The principals were keen on the issue and participated fully. It was as if they needed a platform to air their views on the topic. The interview with the first two lasted for an hour respectively but the third interview lasted more than an hour. Brief notes were made throughout the interview. The participants were assured of anonymity. Interviews with principals were tape-recorded with the permission of the principals and were later transcribed.

The characteristics of the principals are presented in Table 3.3.

3.6.2.2 *Focus group interview with educators*

In School A the interview took place at the time, date and venue agreed upon by the researcher and the three educators. The interview took place during school hours, as the learners had finished their exams and the educators were finished with their marking, reports and schedules. The interview was conducted in the laboratory. The educators preferred to be interviewed in the morning between nine and ten. The atmosphere was relaxed with no

pressure of marking exam scripts. The educators spoke freely and shared their hopes and fears. When the interview started, one educator was not present but joined in the middle of the interview. At the end he wanted to contribute where he had missed. The interview lasted at least an hour.

In School B everything was arranged prior to the arrival of the researcher. All the educators were present with a book and pen. The interview took place in the hall. There was no disturbance. The interview went smoothly and all educators participated fully.

In School C the interview took place in the principal's office. The time scheduled for the interview was between 08:00 and 08:30. There was a delay and the interview started at 09:00. One educator was reluctant to come because of a dispute with the principal. At the end he came. The atmosphere was tense at first but as we proceeded the educators opened up and spoke freely, some even joking about African beliefs. There were many disturbances: the telephone, educators coming in and out of the office, and joking as they used a computer in an adjacent room for playing games. We managed to finish, but the interview took more time than scheduled. The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 3.4 through 3.6.

All interviews were conducted in English. Tswana was occasionally used to clarify certain points, afterwards it was translated into English. In all interviews an interview schedule was used (Appendix B). However, this did not rigidly dictate the interview and participants were free to raise issues.

These interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. Each tape-recording was carefully labelled and later transcribed. The researcher took notes during the interview to supplement the tape-recording. The researcher, however, ensured that note taking did not interfere with the spontaneous nature of the focus group discussion (Hoberg 1999:141).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CODING CATEGORIES

3.7.1 Data analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher needs to organise the information that has been gathered. Van Niekerk (1991:137) maintains that, once data collection has been completed, the researcher should begin the process of analysing the data. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:153) data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts and the materials that are accumulated to increase the researchers understanding of them and to present what is discovered to others. Analysis of data is conducted so that the researching can detect a consistent pattern. Glesne and Peshkin (1992:127) meanwhile describe analysis as the organisation of what has been observed in order to ‘make sense’ of what has been discovered. The researcher has two prime sources to draw from in organising the analysis.

According to Mutton (2001:208), analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes and patterns that are related. The aim of analysis is to understand the various data elements and see if there are patterns that can be identified to establish themes.

Rubin and Rubin (1995:226) agree that data analysis begins while the interview is still underway. This preliminary analysis tells the researcher how to redesign questions to focus on central themes as the interview continues.

To begin the final data analysis, the material from all interviews that speak of one theme are put into one category. The goal is to integrate the themes and concepts into a theory that offers an accurate, detailed interpretation of the research (Rubin & Rubin 1995:227).

Analysis of data is conducted, so that the researcher can detect a consistent pattern. The researcher has two prime sources to draw from in organising the analysis:

- The questions that were generated during the interview; and
- Analytic insight and interpretation that emerged during data collection.

Patton (1990:380) further stipulates that once the researcher is certain that all the data are there, has checked out the quality of the data, filled in any missing gaps, then formal analysis begins.

In this study, the taped interviews and the notes with the three principals and the focus group interviews with educators were transcribed personally by the researcher because she believed that she would be able to understand the context within which the different principals and educators made certain viewpoints known.

Tuckman (1994:366) suggests that events cannot be understood unless the researcher interprets how they are perceived and interpreted by the participants. The interviews are transcribed in its entirety, notwithstanding certain sections which at first glance appear to be irrelevant.

In analysing the data, the researcher reads the transcripts and notes carefully to get a sense of the whole (Creswell 1994:155; Marshall & Rossman 1995:113). The researcher takes the data and reduces it into certain patterns, categories and codes them. Taylor and Bogdan (1984:136) say that the process of coding is a systematic way of developing and refining interpretations of the data. Marshall and Rossman (1995:111) regard qualitative data analysis as the search for general statements about relationships among patterns of data. Therefore, data material belonging to the same category is put together. Erickson (1992:202) suggests that the purpose of analysis is to reveal what is inside the ordinary lives of the participants by identifying the activities and categorising them.

3.7.2 The development of coding categories

The process of developing coding categories is part of the analysis of the data. Glesne and Peshkin (1992:127) suggest that while working with the data, the researcher creates

explanations, poses hypothesis, develops theories and links the story to other stories. To do so, the researcher must categorise, synthesise and search for patterns and interpret data that have been collected through interviews.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992:132) describe coding as a process of sorting those scraps of collected data (i.e. interview transcripts and notes) that are applicable to the research purpose. Furthermore, Glesne and Peshkin (1992:132) suggest that each major code should distinguish a particular concept or idea.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher reviewed all data collected and searched for possible categories bearing in mind some of the suggestions by Bogdan and Biklen (1992:166-172).

3.7.3 Processing of data

According to Van Dalen (1978:382), the total data collection and data analysis procedure should be worked out in details before data processing. The researcher will then know what data is relevant to the study to facilitate processing. Van Dalen (1978:382) adds that data processing is the procedure of converting raw data into some form to enable the researcher to summarise the relevant data.

Thus, in this study the researcher can identify meaningful data from the interviews, retrieve, isolate and group them for processing. The pattern forms the basis for the emerging story from the data to be told by the qualitative researcher (Creswell 1990:154).

3.7.4 Internal validity

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:391) state that internal validity refers to the extent to which the explanation of the events matches the real world of the participants. Therefore, the

interpretation of the events has the same meaning with that of the participants. Thus, during the research both the participants and the researcher should agree on the meaning of the events as they unfold. Shimahara (1988:89) contends that internal validity is related to validity. Both are used to measure the meaning derived from both the researcher and the participants.

Shimahara (1988:89) states the following strategies to increase internal validity:

- The length of time spend on data collection.
- Participants' language where the phrases used, are understood by both the researcher and the participants.
- Field research which takes place in the natural settings, where participants are interviewed.

In this study, internal validity is enhanced by allowing the participants to check the phrases used and the tape-recording including the researcher's notes.

3.7.5 Triangulation

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:498) triangulation is the cross-validation of different data sources. The researcher compares the different sources to see if the same pattern keeps recurring.

In this study data collected is triangulated by:

- comparing data from the individual interviews with the three principals from three different schools.
- comparing data from focus group interviews with nine educators. Three from each school.
- comparing data from both the principals and educators.
- comparing data from the notes written during the interview.

- comparing essays written by Grade ten learners in one school.

All the ideas that emerge from the discussions are triangulated by the researcher and the participants (Creswell 1990:167). Tesch (1990:97) says that the final goal of the researcher is triangulation when the information gathered, emerges as a larger picture.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this study both the meaning and use of qualitative method were explained. The method used to obtain data, that is, individual interviews and focus group interviews was described. Also learners from Grade ten were asked to write an essay to voice their expectations of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. The design research was described and the means by which data were analysed, processed and triangulated.

In Chapter 4 the findings of the research are reported.