

**THE SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MORAL DEGENERATION OF
THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY: TOWARDS A SOLUTION**

by

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SUMMARY

Moral degeneration is a universal phenomenon which negatively affects many societies, also the South African society. The South African society, with specific reference to family life and school life is experiencing a serious moral breakdown. The media is constantly reporting this breakdown, which is evident in social ills such as a general lack of discipline and self-discipline, violence, poverty, unemployment, a high crime rate, promiscuity, school vandalism and corruption. The literature study indicates that these moral ills have negative implications for society and for education, and that they are mainly the result of a lack of a positive value system in society as a whole. This study aims at determining the role of “values education” in addressing the problem of moral degeneration. The conceptual framework upon which the study is based is known as social reconstructivism. It is a philosophical theory which proposes that society should be transformed by addressing the social problems which it experiences.

An ethnographic research design and grounded theory were employed. Questionnaires were distributed to 200 learners from four public schools in order to determine their value systems. Trends that were found after the analysis of the questionnaires were further explored by means of in-depth interviews with some of these learners. The main data collecting instrument was the semi-structured interview (individual and focus group interviews). The participants were parents, principals, teachers, community leaders and learners, who are all important stakeholders in education. Data were collected in the Eastern Cape Province over a period of five months. The empirical research findings were compared to literature findings. Both these findings revealed that, to an alarming extent, the moral code in South African society is on the decline. Currently education in the home, school and community does not convey a positive value system to learners - thus perpetuating the problem of a society in decline.

In the light of the findings, guidelines have been developed in order to improve school practices and to suggest possible solutions to the social problems that endanger the future prosperity of the South African society.

Keywords: Education, values, values education (moral education), multicultural education, moral degeneration (moral decay), moral ills, society, community, morality, religion, social reconstructivism, qualitative research.

DECLARATION

I declare that THE SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MORAL DEGENERATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY: TOWARDS A SOLUTION is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

31 July 2009

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Signature

(Ms Jaysveree M. Louw)

.....

Date

Student number: 3676-7077

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear sister

LORRAINE M. LOUW

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NDoE	National Department of Education
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PDoE	Provincial Department of Education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UK	United Kingdom
WEPU	Wits Education Policy Unit
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, AIM OF THE RESEARCH, RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROGRAMME

1.1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

The South African society is under threat because it seems to be experiencing a value dilemma. Straughan (1988:1; Pillay in De Wet 2003b:168; De Klerk & Rens 2003:359 and Mokgalabone 1999:55) claim that modern society, also the South African society, is becoming increasingly more unstable, belligerent, lawless, self-centered, violent, undisciplined and permissive, with these trends being more apparent among the younger generation. Pretorius (1998:289) supports this claim when he concedes that “it is evident to sociologists and criminologists that there is an increase in juvenile delinquency in modern societies.” Straughan (1988) states that there is a general decline in values such as respect for authority, politeness and good manners, resulting in children being ruder, continuously using bad language and caring less about their behaviour and appearance. According to Prinsloo (2005:27-30) children have little respect for their own dignity, are self-absorbed, suffer from negative self-concepts, refuse to accept authority and do not value others or their lives and possessions. When these youngsters reach adulthood they often adopt anti-social attitudes and habits and often lapse into criminal activities. According to Rens, Van der Walt & Vreken (2005:215) and Pretorius (1998:297) the moral degeneration of society is particularly evident in the high crime rate and immoral lifestyles which are accepted as the norm in many circles. De Klerk & Rens (2003:345) support this statement when they claim that because of the absence of consideration for one another in society, the high crime rate and incidents of violence, one realizes that currently a lack of values conducive to a healthy society and well-disciplined schools is evident. Carl & Johannes (2002:162) and Pretorius (1998:289) further contend that within the context of political change in South Africa since 1994, there exist various educational, socio-political and cultural problems

and challenges such as, amongst others, poverty, crime, unemployment, the lack of a value system among children and adults, sexual licentiousness which results in the HIV/AIDS pandemic, drug and alcohol abuse and a lack of discipline in schools and at home. Apart from the lack of values Phillips (2000:9) is of the opinion that moral relativism, which claims that moral values are relevant only to particular societies or cultural groups, is also a leading factor that contributes to the moral degeneration of society, because what is regarded as morally correct and acceptable in one culture may not be morally correct in another.

The impression that one gets from the above observations is that the moral decay of society is closely related to an unwillingness to adhere to values. Also, it is questionable whether values education at school and in the home takes place adequately. There is no doubt that children need to be taught values, because a value system provides the framework by which what is morally correct and acceptable can be measured. According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) (2002:8) and the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001:iv) the promotion of values, or values education, is crucial not only for the sake of personal and moral development, but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values that are applicable to all cultural groups. Enriching children with a sense of values, whether these values are taught by parents, teachers, religious institutions or the community, means enriching the society as well, because children are part of a particular community, which in turn, is part of the larger society. It is thus not only a question of whose values should be taught, but also who should teach children these values.

General consensus exists among educationists and other scholars that the transmission of values is the task of parents and teachers. Prinsloo & Du Plessis (2006:52), Smit & Liebenberg (2003:1) and Rens *et al* (2005:222-223) contend that both the family as the primary educator, and the school as the secondary educator, are responsible for the teaching of values. Because children are born in a family and most of them spend the first six to seven years of their lives within the family structure before they go to school, parents are the primary educators of the child. It is only after the age of six to seven that

they come into contact with teachers at school as their secondary educators. Schalekamp (2001:2) and Olivier & Bloem (2004:177) are of the opinion that teachers, as secondary educators, should not only be subject specialists, but that they should be equipped with the skills to act as role models and transmitters of values, in and outside the school. This implies that teachers have a dual task, namely that of transferring subject knowledge, and of being the transmitters of norms and values.

Families are, however, increasingly failing to realize their educational responsibility and duty; this places a huge burden on teachers, to the extent that some teachers even neglect their teaching task (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:52).

Not only is the school and parental home responsible for educating the child about upholding moral values, but legislation, in the form of the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, stipulates that there has to be a partnership between all the stakeholders who have an interest in education, including parents and teachers. This can ensure that learners become well-balanced citizens and that schools function properly and effectively. Mutual involvement between these two, and also other stakeholders, is therefore associated with greater educational efficiency (Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) 2003:H-7; Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001:3-4).

However, the issue of moral relativism poses a challenge for the teaching of values, because it may be that the values of the teachers are different from those of the learners they have to teach, particularly in the many multicultural schools in South Africa (Le Roux 1997:17). Teachers are increasingly confronted with multicultural learner compositions in schools and in their classrooms. Schoeman (1988:199) and Beck (in Rens *et al* 2005:221) state that when the values of the teachers are different to those of the learners, or even conflicting, this may confuse the learners because there will be no continuity between the schools and the parental home.

From the above exposition it is evident that values and education are inseparable: the teaching of values, irrespective of by whom they are taught, cannot be separated from

education, and education cannot be separated from the teaching of values: both are crucial for the improvement and transformation of society (De Klerk & Rens 2003:357). Educating learners about values would hopefully result in a decrease in their immoral behaviour and actions.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The South African society is confronted with social ills such as moral and sexual licentiousness, a lack of respect for the self and others, drug and alcohol abuse, materialism and consumerism, criminal activities, and a lack of moral and social obligation. These ills are mainly caused by the lack of a proper value system in the South African society.

1.2.1 Research questions

The primary research question that guides this research project is:

What role can values education (as should be provided by the two stakeholders that are directly involved with education, namely the family and the school) play in addressing the issue of the moral breakdown of the present-day South African society?

Against this background the following questions need to be answered:

- What are values and what role does a value system play in the moral development of children towards responsible adulthood?
- Does a lack of values contribute to the moral degeneration of a society?
- Will the teaching of values in the family and in school have an influence on the moral development of children and eventually on the moral fiber of society?
- How can teachers and parents be equipped with the skills to teach children about values?

1.3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The overarching aim of this research is to determine, by means of a literature study and qualitative research, the role that values education (as should be provided by two key stakeholders, namely the school and the family) can play in addressing the problem of the moral degeneration of the South African society. From the above aim the following objectives can be derived: to

- define the concept values and to determine what role a value system plays in the moral development of children towards responsible adulthood;
- investigate whether a lack of values contributes to the moral degeneration of a society;
- determine whether the teaching of values in the family and in school will have an influence on the moral development of children and eventually on the moral fiber of society;
- explore how teachers and parents can be equipped with the skills to teach children about values.

1.4 MOTIVATION, RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

Moral degeneration is a universal problem that affects many countries (Mokgalabone 1999:55). It causes a moral crisis in schools, homes and in the society. The South African society is plagued by an escalation of social evils and educational problems such as violence, crime, a lack of discipline in schools, corruption (for example in the government and in schools), alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancies, abortions, prostitution, and general lawlessness. These problems are regularly reported by the media. News headlines and newspaper/magazine articles such as the following are just a few examples to highlight the extent at which our society is degenerating:

“Gang steals \$16.5 million from SAA jumbo” (Sunday Times, 26 March 2006);

“Unqualified attorney found guilty” (Daily Dispatch, 29 August 2007);

“Big-time crime hits our malls” (*You*, November 2005);

“Hundreds mourn slain teacher” (Daily Dispatch, 7 February 2008);
 “Pregnant by my father: girl’s incest nightmare” (Drum, March 2005); and
 “Evil stepmother injects boy with HIV” (Move, 16 May 2007).

In a study undertaken by Matzopoulos (2005:29, 32) it was reported that alcohol was an important risk factor for people who commit homicide. The same study indicated that the highest number of violent deaths was committed by people in the 25-29 age group. Many South Africans would like to see a drastic decrease in the high crime rate, in undisciplined children, corruption, prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse and other social ills in the country. Finding possible solutions for these problems by focusing on the teaching of values may be effective and helpful to teachers, learners, religious leaders, academics, policy makers, parents, and the wider society. According to Mariaye (2006:20) education is one of the ways (probably the most effective one) that can be used to address the various social ills of society. She states that children should be morally educated in order to be able to participate effectively in the societies where they live, because these children are the future leaders in the countries in which they live. A child who has been adequately educated will hopefully know how to communicate, how to treat others, how to co-exist with others; thus, such a child will likely be socially competent (Pretorius 1998:15).

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research will be conducted through a study of relevant literature, and also by means of an empirical study.

1.5.1 Literature study

Mouton (2001:86) indicates that a literature review forms an essential component of any study. A literature review implies an identification, a summary, analysis and interpretation of the theoretical framework and the literature related to the topic or research problem (Kaniki 2006:19, 20). Kaniki (2006:19) contends that without an

identified research problem that is important enough to warrant investigation, there would be no need to conduct research.

The research for this study will comprise a study of relevant literature of primary and secondary sources. Core or primary sources are the most accurate sources of information as they contain original research and they often contain work most similar to one's own. Secondary sources are those that usually cite from primary sources. Primary sources are for example books, academic research journals, dissertations or theses and government publications. Newspaper articles, internet articles and magazine articles are regarded as secondary sources (Kaniki 2006:23; Mouton 2001:88).

1.5.2 Empirical investigation

Research methods are the means that researchers employ to collect information for research purposes, and can either be quantitative or qualitative (Hancock 1998:1). The most obvious distinction between these two research methods is that quantitative methods usually employ statistical techniques, whereas qualitative research does not, or does so only to a minor degree (The Open University 2001:26). Qualitative research can be defined as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Hoepfl 1997:1). Cormack (1995:140) defines quantitative research as a formal, objective and systematic process in which numerical data is utilized to obtain information about the world. Hoepfl (1997:1-2) indicates that quantitative researchers seek casual determination, prediction and generalization of findings, while qualitative researchers seek, instead, illumination, understanding and extrapolation to similar situations. Qualitative researchers want to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations or phenomena as they occur in the real world of the participants, and usually study these in the participants' natural setting over a specific period of time. This is particularly true for those who approach qualitative research from an interpretative perspective (Hoepfl 1997:3; Kelly 2006:287).

This research project will adopt a qualitative research method.

The researcher will enter the research setting (the present-day South African society) with the necessary care and will engage with the research participants in an open and empathetic manner as is required from an interpretive researcher. The data will be collected in context and with the minimal disturbance to the natural setting. The researcher will attempt to gain an understanding of the particular context and the nature of the interactions within that context (Hoepfl 1997:3). She will seek to understand the way in which people, and specifically the secondary school learners, view the necessity and importance of developing a value system, how parents, teachers, principals and community leaders transmit a value system to the learners, and the reasons why there seems to be a loss of a value system in the South African society. In the constructivist paradigm the methodology includes an analysis of discourse and text. The researcher will attempt to identify the meanings attached by parents, learners, teachers, principals and community leaders to values and norms, and the importance of achieving a positive value system in order to live a responsible and fulfilled life.

Participants will be purposefully selected from the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. Purposive sampling will hopefully assist the researcher in obtaining a range of illuminating ideas from information-rich cases as illustrated by the participants.

1.5.3 Research methodology

1.5.3.1 The population sample

Purposive sampling of participants will include parents, teachers, principals, learners and community leaders. The participants are representative of the Eastern Cape community, and are important stakeholders in education. The sample will consist of:

- **Learners**

Fifty Grade 11 learners will be selected randomly from four public schools in the Eastern Cape. The selected schools will include two former Model C schools, a school in a previously Coloured township and a school in a rural area. Learners will be the only participants to complete questionnaires (see Appendix D). After the questionnaires are

analyzed, a number of learners who had completed the questionnaires will be interviewed. These follow-up interviews will be conducted to explore issues that were not clear from the questionnaires, and to probe trends or tendencies that emerged from the questionnaires in order to enhance understanding of the phenomenon to be researched.

- Teachers

Focus group interviews will be conducted with teachers from the four schools - one interview at each school. The focus group interviews will be conducted with six to eight teachers, all selected randomly.

- Principals

Individual interviews will be conducted with the principals of the four selected schools.

- Parents

The researcher will, as far as possible, select parents who have children in the selected schools. Focus group interviews will be conducted with six to eight parents per group.

- Community leaders

Four community leaders who reside in the communities where the schools are situated will be selected. Individual interviews will be conducted with these community leaders.

1.5.4 Analysis of the data

Hancock (1998:16) states that analysis of data in a research project involves summarizing the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features. Qualitative data analysis is defined as “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (Bogdan & Biklen in Hoepfl 1997:6).

In this research project data will be collected by means of questionnaires and interviews with the participants. Once the data have been collected it will be analyzed by means of content analysis and constant comparative analysis. Qualitative researchers generally make use of an inductive analysis of data, which means that the critical themes emerge from the data (Hoepfl 1997:12). According to Hancock (1998:17) content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of the text in order to classify, summarize and tabulate it. The content can be words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, pictures, symbols or ideas. The content can be analyzed on two levels: the first and basic level of analysis is a descriptive account of the data, namely what the participants actually said, with nothing read into it and nothing assumed about it. The second and higher level of analysis is interpretive, which means that it is concerned with interpreting the data and trying to understand what was meant by the response, or what was inferred or implied. It is sometimes called the latent level of analysis.

1.5.5 Ethical considerations

Ethics is an important issue for research, be it educational or medical, or any other research. Because the field of study of researchers in education is usually the learning and behavior of human beings, often children, the nature of such research may embarrass, hurt, frighten, impose on, or otherwise negatively affect the lives of the people who participate in it (Tuckman in Hurter 1988:19-20). Doing research not only implies that the researcher enters the scientific community or the field, but also involves the acceptance of a code of conduct of ethical principles. Thus, in order to engage in scientific research the researcher is required to make a moral commitment to the search for truth and knowledge concerning the educational reality. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001:196-199) the American Educational Research Association and the American Psychological Association stipulate the following code of ethics that needs to be adhered to when conducting research:

- The right to remain anonymous: The participants' privacy and interests must be respected. Participants have the right to insist that the data collected from them will be treated with confidentiality.

- Appropriate and informed consent must be asked from the participants: The researcher should inform the subjects of all aspects of the research that might influence their willingness to participate. The researcher must also answer all queries on features that might have adverse effects or consequences. When obtaining permission to do the research, the researcher must explain the following to the participants: the purpose of the research, the intended use of the data, the time required for participation, and the non-interfering and non-judgmental role of the researcher. The participants must be informed that they have the right to terminate their participation at any time.
- The design, the research itself and the report of the findings must be declared.
- The right to expect responsibility from the researcher: Participants have the right to expect and demand that the researcher will be sensitive to their human dignity, and that he/she will be respectful and well-meaning in his/her intentions. Researchers should assure participants that they will not be harmed by participating in the research, or that possible harm will be minimized.
- The researcher must comply with the professional standards governing the conduct of the research.
- Obligation to the profession means sharing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the research project to the benefit of all. The researcher is morally obliged to undertake his/her study in such a way that the findings obtained will not result in misleading information. Moreover, it is expected from the researcher to report exactly and honestly what the findings are (Hurter 1988:19-22).

1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH AREA

The research area will include schools in the East London district in the Eastern Cape Province. This district was chosen because the researcher resides here. The Eastern Cape consists of the following districts: the Alfred Nzo district, the Amathole district, the Cacadu district, the Chris Hani district, the Nelson Mandela Metropole, the Oliver Tambo district and the Ukhahlamba district. East London is situated in the Amathole

district in the Buffalo City Municipality, which is the most populous municipality in the province (http://www.ectourism.co.za/districts_Easterncape.asp, 2009:1). Teachers, learners and principals from three secondary schools in three urban areas and one school in a rural area will be asked to volunteer in the research. Schools in different geographical areas and communities are selected in order to ensure representation of the diverse communities in South Africa.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001:22-24) knowledge and findings acquired through empirical research are limited by the nature of both educational practice and research. “Educational research is constrained by ethical and legal considerations when conducting research on human beings, the public nature of education, by the complexity of educational practices and methodological limitations” (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:22). Each of these four constraints will be discussed briefly:

- *Human beings:* Educational research focuses primarily on human beings. The researcher is ethically responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects while conducting a study. Principles of confidentiality of the data and privacy of the individual impose limitations on the kinds of studies that can be conducted in valid ways.
- *Education as public institution:* Education is a public enterprise that is largely influenced by the external environment. The communities that surround the schools can undergo changes during political and societal transformation. The public nature of education also influences the kind of research questions that can be investigated. Because schools exist for educational purposes, not for research purposes, the research should, as far as possible not unduly interfere with educational processes.
- *Complexity of research problems:* A third constraint in educational research is the complexity of the research problems. The people involved - parents, learners, teachers, principals and community leaders - are complex human beings and

they actively select the elements to which they respond. They may opt not to respond to certain questions. Furthermore, different individuals process ideas differently. Educational research has demonstrated the complexity of individual differences. The educational researcher thus deals simultaneously with many variables, often ambiguous ones, in a single study. In addition, social scientists believe that individuals cannot be studied meaningfully by ignoring the context of real life.

- *Methodological difficulties:* A fourth limitation in educational research is methodological difficulties. Qualitative research has methodological difficulties, especially those inherent in employing multi-method strategies, addressing the reflexive research role and making explicit data analysis techniques. Qualitative research is sometimes criticized from the conventional viewpoint for the lack of reliable and generalizable findings to a larger population (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:24).

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Education

Education is an interaction or a relationship between a child (learner) and an adult, with the educational aim of guiding the child towards responsible adulthood. It is the (positive) influence exercised by adults on children, who are often not yet ready and mature enough for social and moral accountability. Its object is to arouse and develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him or her by society (Ballantine in Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:28).

1.8.2 Socio-education and Socio-educational concepts

Socio-education (or Sociology of Education) is one of the sub-disciplines of education. It is a philosophical as well as a sociological concept and is the study of how (social) institutions like the family, the school, the state and community structures affect education and its outcome. Socio-education is mostly concerned with the relationships

between children and adults and the quality of the guidance and support which children and the youth receive from their educators during all their developmental stages. These relationships are characterized by features such as mutual trust, effective communication and support towards adequate socialization of children and youth within their communities. It also implies support towards positive self-concept formation and successful self-actualization. Guidance and support towards the internalization of a positive value system form the basis for the successful realization of all the other features. In this study emphasis falls mainly on the role of teachers as transmitters of values in the schooling system. Because learners spend so much of their time with teachers, teachers have a significant influence on their lives, their life- and worldviews and their value systems. There has to be a relationship of trust, honesty and open communication between learner and teacher.

The school, as is the home and the community, is a tool for value transmission. The positive values the teachers transmit to the learners (and the way the teachers project these values in their own lives) will be a determining factor in the way learners internalize and practice values.

1.8.3 Moral education

Moral education refers, according to Mariaye (2006:23) to the process by which the relevant knowledge, attitudes, values and skills are transmitted and developed in children. Moral education thus focuses on the development of the cognitive, social and emotional skills which are necessary for moral thinking, feeling and behaviour.

In this study the terms values education and moral education will be used interchangeably.

1.8.4 Culture

Culture means the pattern of living that is characteristic of a human community and that has continuity from generation to generation. We may therefore speak of a European

culture, an Asian culture, an Arab culture or an African culture, amongst others. In each of these cultures there could be sub-cultures (as is the case in South Africa) that represent variations in the common pattern of living exhibited by the different, widely spread communities of each of these cultures.

1.8.5 Values

To define the term values is not an easy task. Values are ideals or beliefs that guide or qualify our personal conduct and interaction with others. They help us to distinguish right from wrong, and inform us on how to conduct our lives in a meaningful way. Plunkett (in De Klerk & Rens 2003:356) describes values as relatively stable choices or preferences about how to behave. Values are directives when one has to make certain choices. In every choice a certain group of values will influence our behaviour and decisions. Values can be classified in different categories, *i.e.*, personal values (honesty), cultural values (the practice of one's traditions or religion), constitutional values (equality) and social values (altruism), to mention just a few.

1.8.6 Society

It is important, for the purpose of this study, to distinguish between society and community, because these concepts are usually used interchangeably. A society, like the South African society, the American society or the Brazilian society consists of a number of communities which often share a common interest. Sutton (as cited by Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:39) describes a society as the social space or context comprehensive of all of an area's resident population, including its range of institutions of social interaction. The Essential English Dictionary (2003:743) defines a society as "a group of people forming a single community with its own distinctive culture and institutions" and "an organized group of people sharing a common aim or interest."

1.8.7 Community

According to the Essential English Dictionary (2003:149) a community is “a group of people with shared origins of interests.” Prinsloo & Du Plessis (2006:38) agree with this definition and define community as “a group of people who live within specific geographical boundaries at a certain point in time and who share cultural commonalities, collective activities and certain interests.”

1.8.8 Socio-educational implications of the moral decay in the South African society

The moral decay in the South African society has profound and undesirable effects on schools, politics, the economy, family life and community life. Moral decay inhibits the prosperous growth and development of the country. Implications of this moral decay on the society and on schools are amongst others, the collapse of family and community life, the collapse of a culture of learning and teaching in schools, negative attitudes of the new generation in thinking that they are entitled to success and riches without working for it, dishonesty, lack of integrity, lack of self-discipline, crime, violence and corruption (in schools, communities and government circles). These negative implications due to the decline of norms and values are a serious threat to the future of the South African society.

1.9 THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The chapters in the research will evolve as follows:

Chapter 1: Introductory orientation, statement of the problem, aim of the research, research design, methodology and research programme.

Chapter two: Values, morality and the importance of positive moral development for society.

As has been indicated in this chapter (Chapter 1) the moral decay of society is closely related to a lack of values and values education. Chapter 2 will explore the concept values and other related concepts like morality, religion and life- and worldview. The importance of positive moral development for society will also be discussed.

Chapter three: The moral degeneration of the present-day South African society.

Chapter 3 will explore some of the negative factors that contribute to the moral degeneration of the South African society.

Chapter four: The task and role of societal structures in promoting values in society and in the education of children.

This chapter will give an outline of the role and task of the school and family in relation to values education. Other societal structures that play an indirect role in education that will be discussed are the church and the state. The mutual relationship that exists among these four structures will also be explored.

Chapter five: Research methods and research design.

In Chapter 5 the research design that will be employed to collect data will be discussed. A qualitative research approach will be adopted in this study. Interviews will be conducted with parents, teachers, learners, principals and community leaders to ascertain their perceptions on why they think society is degenerating. Learners will also be requested to complete questionnaires. The questionnaires will be followed up by in-depth interviews with some of these learners.

Chapter six: Analysis and presentation of the data.

The results of the data collected will be discussed, interpreted and analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter seven: Summary, conclusions and recommendations.

In the final chapter the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the research will be presented.

1.10 CONCLUSION

The South African society is experiencing a moral crisis, as is evident by amongst others the lack of discipline in schools and the high crime rate. A study of relevant literature indicates that these problems are mainly caused by a lack of a positive value system in society because the value transmitters (parents, teachers and other adult community members) seem to be increasingly failing in their educational task of imparting values to the new generation. The role of values, and values education, in addressing the moral decay of society will be investigated by means of a literature study and an empirical investigation.

In the next chapter the concept values and other related concepts, e.g. religion and life- and worldview will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

VALUES, MORALITY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE MORAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SOCIETY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that the present-day South African society is undergoing a serious value crisis. This moral decay in the society is evident in amongst others, the high crime rate, the lack of discipline at home and at school, substance abuse, prostitution, and general lawlessness and corruption by many members of society.

In this chapter the concept values and other related concepts such as morality, religion and a life- and worldview will be defined and discussed, because it is important to know what these concepts implicate and how they relate to values. The importance of positive moral development for a well-functioning society and the effects of the lack thereof will also be discussed.

2.2 ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT VALUES

From the previous chapter it is evident that many authors agree that the moral decay of society is caused by people's inability to comply with positive values. It is therefore important to discuss what values are and where they originate from. Clarity on the origin of the concept values and its meaning will provide an indication of the role they play in the lives of human beings and in society. However, to define the concept values is not an easy task, especially because it is closely related to other concepts such as norms, ethics and principles. In everyday spoken language, people use these concepts as synonyms, or interchangeably. What further complicates the definition is the fact that its origin cannot be understood without explaining concepts like religion and a life- and worldview. An attempt will, however, be made to clarify the concept and its origin within the context of this research project.

According to De Klerk & Rens (2003:355) values are first and foremost the result of the application of a person's principles which he/she obtains from his/her life- and worldview, which in turn is grounded in one's religion. Religion is thus often an important source of values. Your religion teaches you what is right and what is wrong. From a Christian perspective the term values is often explained by making reference to the Bible. Many values, like mutual love and honesty have their origin in Scripture. For Christians morality is part (or should be part) of their every day lives. Although the concepts values and principles are closely related, they are not the same. De Klerk & Rens (2003:355) claim that both are human-related and give direction to our existence on earth, but principles are deep fundamental truths that have a universal application. Strauss (1978:303) defines a principle as 'a relatively constant and universal unit' that we as humans are subjected to. From a Biblical perspective, principles are the primary source, and when acting in accordance with principles, people obtain or decide on a personal value system. (Religious) values are very powerful values in determining behaviour because they not only have to do with our relationship with other people, but also with our relationship with God. To a believer in God, there are laws that determine what is right and what is wrong. To break these laws means you are committing a sin that brings separation between you and God. Christian values are derived from, or originate from Biblical principles which in turn have their origin in Scripture. A principle can therefore be seen as a starting point from which values are derived. According to the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (2002:60), for the Christian the following are, or should be the guiding principles in his or her life:

- a) A personal and trusting relationship with God as Father, and not only rigid adherence to religious laws.
- b) Good relationships and care among Christians are essential to moral growth (Love one another as I have loved you – John 13:34).
- c) Concern for the political and economic affairs of human society.
- d) A rejection of violence – the pursuit of Christian ends through non-violent means (Love your enemies and those who persecute you – Matthew 5:39 and 44).

- e) A readiness to forgive those who offend, injure or harm you (Seventy times seven – Matthew 18:22).
- f) A willingness to suffer and even to die for one's convictions (Whoever loses his life for My sake will save it – Luke 9:24 and The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them – John 15:13).

Thus, from the directives and teachings of the Ten Commandments and other Biblical principles, issues of morality and ethics concern not only people like theologians, educationists and philosophers, but also everyday, ordinary people (Stevenson 2002:27).

For a Christian values are determined by his or her life- and worldview which is founded in the Bible. This life- and worldview will often be the point of departure in every decision that is made (consciously or unconsciously) or an action that is taken. Van der Walt (1994:44) states that a life- and worldview is the link between a person's deepest religious convictions, his/her faith, and his/her life in day to day reality. While principles are constant and universal, values are not constant and static, and are not binding to all persons, although sometimes people speak of universal values. People have, as far as values are concerned a normative freedom of choice. One can choose whether one wants to behave in a just or unjust manner or do the right or the wrong thing, as long as one knows that these actions will have certain consequences. However, principles are only universal to the people whom they pertain to. Therefore, someone who is not a Christian does not have to live in accordance with Biblical principles. (Even people who are Christians do not always live strictly according to Biblical guidelines). Biblical principles or Biblical laws are relevant to Christians, and not necessarily to people of other religious convictions. Similarly, the Five Pillars of Islam impose the five disciplines or responsibilities only on Muslims (Roque & Tickner 1994:154). People who are not Muslims do not have to live according to these Five Pillars. But some universal principles, for example 'love thy neighbour as you love yourself', and 'do unto others as you would want them to do unto you' are principles that are shared by the majority of

people and religions of the world (SACE 2002:27). Therefore there are religions, as can be seen from the ones mentioned below, that share certain principles (SACE 2002:27):

- “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man.” (Judaism)
- The Udanavarga states “Do not hurt others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.” (Buddhism)
- “This is the sum of duty: do nothing to others that would cause you pain if it was done to you.” (Hinduism)
- “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.” (Islam)
- “Do for others what you want them to do for you. This is the meaning of the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets.” (Christianity)

The following principles which are outlined by Bottery (1990:36-38) and cited from C. S. Lewis (1947) examine the ethical system of major historical and current civilizations. Bottery (1990) poses the question whether these principles, or variations, can be considered as universal:

- Do not lie.
- Do not take from another what is his/hers.
- Help those weaker or less fortunate than yourself.
- Respect your elders.
- Treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.
- Be responsible for the youth of society.
- Be prepared to stand up and fight for your rights and beliefs.
- Have special concern for those close to you.

The problem with these and other principles is that they cannot be made applicable to everybody under all circumstances. Although many people would agree with and try to obey these principles, justifications can sometimes be given for when one does not live according to them, as can be illustrated by the following two examples:

- *Do not lie:* There may be situations where lying is acceptable for some people, for example, if you lie to save someone's life. If a drug dealer is looking for a drug addict to kill him/her because the addict owes him/her money, would you tell the dealer where the addict is, knowing the addict is going to be killed?
- *Do not take from another what is his:* Stealing is morally wrong, but there may be certain circumstances where the principle could be waived. Some people would not judge a poor mother who cannot find work if she takes bread from a store to feed her hungry child. Nor would they want her to be punished, although theft is a punishable offense and is against Biblical principles.

The above scenarios pose difficult moral dilemmas: "Can certain crimes and the practice of negative values, as seen in the above examples be justifiable, irrespective of why and by whom they are committed?" "When are negative values like lying and dishonesty justifiable, and who decides when they are justifiable, or even acceptable?"

A value may also be defined as a belief, a mission, or a philosophy that is meaningful to us as human beings. Whether we are consciously aware of them or not, every individual has a set of values that gives direction to his or her life. Although numerous different meanings and definitions are attached to the term value, the definition that will be used in this study, and which is often quoted in literature, is the following: a value is an opinion or view, explicit or implicit, characteristic of an individual or group, to which preference is given. In other words, a value implies an opinion or view that is enticing, desirable, and preferable and influences the choice of possible actions, intentions or end-behaviour (Kluckhorn in De Klerk & Rens 2003:356). Even though it is difficult to give a precise definition of values, researchers do agree that values are directional guidelines or ideals, they are codes of behaviour and are derived from a person's life-and worldview.

A value system refers to how an individual or a group of individuals organize their ethical or ideological values (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values>, 2007:1). From the definition it is clear that values can apply either to an individual or a group (community

or society). A personal value system is held by and applies to one individual, while a communal or social value system applies to a group. Patrick (2000:1038) gives amongst others, the following as synonyms for the term values: principles, ethics, moral codes, moral values, standards of behaviour, rules of conduct. In this research the term values will be used synonymously with the concepts morals and ethics. The Essential English Dictionary (2003:255) gives three definitions of the concept ethics, namely

- a) A code of behaviour, especially for a particular group, profession or individual;
- b) The study of the moral value of human conduct; and
- c) The moral fitness of a decision or a course of action.

2.2.1 Classification of values

Hattingh (in Rens *et al* 2005:217) and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values> (2007:1-2) give the following classification of values:

- Religious values - these indicate man's religious beliefs, e.g. altruism, responsibility and honesty.
- Relationship values – these indicate the relationships between individuals and the value they attach to these relationships, e.g. respect and honesty.
- Moral values - these values indicate the worth of a person with regards to what is right and what is wrong, and are related to one's moral development, e.g. helpfulness and appreciation.
- Esthetical values – indicate the appreciation of beauty, e.g. appreciation of nature.
- Economical values – these values indicate how people value material things.
- Cultural values – indicate that which was created by man and which must be preserved for the future.
- Political values – indicate the practice of politics by man.
- Law values – these are values that indicate justice and the practice of law.
- National values – indicate values that people of a nation adhere to.

- Intellectual values – indicate our mental capacity and how we use it.
- Bodily values – indicate the outer beauty of a person.
- Relaxation values – indicate the diversion of the relaxation that we practice.
- Safety values – indicate the safe existence of man.
- Authority values – indicate the acquisition of power and control, thus authority.
- Self values – indicate man's need to come to self-knowledge and self-actualization.
- Emotional values – indicate the emotional aspects of being human.
- Career values – indicate our career satisfaction.
- Environmental values – indicate man's appreciation of the environment.
- Life values – indicate the values that are attached to existence.
- Personal values - discipline, honesty, respect for others, integrity, cleanliness and wisdom.
- Communal or social values - these are the values that the majority of citizens in a community agree with and/or live by, e.g. honesty, integrity, diligence, self-discipline, and responsibility towards the self and others.

(Translated and adapted from Rens et al 2005:217)

Broodryk (2005:174) gives the following *ubuntu* values and values which are associated with them:

Table 2.1 Some core and associated values for living happily

Core values	Associated values
Humanness	Warmth, tolerance, understanding, forgiveness, peace, humanity
Caring	Empathy, sympathy, helpfulness, charity, friendliness
Sharing	(Unconditional) giving, redistribution, open-handedness
Respect	Commitment, dignity, obedience, order
Compassion	Love, cohesion, forgiveness, spontaneity

According to the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001:31) values, which transcend language and culture are the common currency that make life meaningful. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) emphasizes ten values which are relevant and important for our society and for education. These values are democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, *ubuntu* (human dignity), an open society, accountability (responsibility), the rule of law, respect, and reconciliation (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001:41-42).

The above-mentioned values (and other positive values not mentioned here) are the values that parents and teachers have to instill in their children, preferably from an age when they begin to understand and are able to communicate, when they can exercise self-control, and are able to distinguish between what is allowed and not allowed, acceptable and not acceptable. It is important to note that some of these values overlap. The values of respect and honesty, for example, could be interpreted as religious values, as relationship values and/or as personal values. Equality could be regarded as a political, national or social value.

2.2.2 Values and their role in society

Values can be classified or divided into many categories, and they all play an important role in the lives of individuals and in societies. Every society has a long history of values, customs and beliefs that influence their present-day lives. Values unite societies because conflicts can be settled according to accepted value systems. As societies develop, some of these values and principles become embedded in Constitutions, which are codes of law that are legally binding on every citizen (SACE 2002:31).

Since societies consist of individuals, an individual can simultaneously have both a personal value system and a communal value system. Whenever this happens the two value systems are externally consistent, provided they bear no contradictions or situational exceptions between them (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_system, 2007:1-2). A value system can also be internally consistent or internally inconsistent. An internally consistent value system denotes that personal and communal value systems

do not contradict each other. A value system would be internally inconsistent if these two sets of values contradict each other, or are in conflict with each other (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_system, 2007:2). A person may, for example have a certain set of individual values, but if these values harm others in society, they would be inconsistent with communal values. The opposite is also true, as is indicated by Goode (1997:44) when he states that social values may also at times negatively influence personal ethics. External factors may, for example cause people to act in a selfish manner, or do wrong (anti-social) things, even though they know what they are doing is wrong and often try to justify their behaviour. The ideal would be for personal and communal values to mutually benefit the individual and the society, and not harm any of the two.

Furthermore, values serve the purpose of guiding people to be the best they can and to lead honest and meaningful lives to the benefit of themselves and others around them. The task of transmitting values, however, is not as easy as it seems, especially in South African schools. In South Africa at present, teachers are faced with learners from different cultural and religious backgrounds. At school, teachers may have to transmit values to children which are different from the values they learn at home, because values are relevant only to particular communities or cultural groups. This phenomenon is referred to as moral or cultural relativism. It is defined by Audi (in Steyn & Wilkinson 1998:204) as “a constructivist view that allows for plurality of morals, facts and truths.” Moral values, according to this school of thought are relative only to a specific culture and are based on that culture’s social customs, thereby varying from culture to culture. For the relativist the value of respect, for example, would only be promoted and practiced in his/her particular culture, and not necessarily in all cultures. According to this view, moral issues are a matter of opinion. Relativists claim that all opinions (from each society or culture) have equal worth and there are no universal values or criteria we can use to judge whether an opinion is true or not (SACE 2002:36). Therefore, if respect is not important in a particular culture, that group should not be judged by those who regard respect as an important value. The problem with this conviction is that many social ills in societies would therefore be acceptable and justifiable. The example of pre-

marital sex can be used to illustrate this point. From a Biblical (or Christian) point of view pre-marital sex is wrong. Christian teachers and parents would discourage their children/learners from engaging in it. The relativist, however, will argue that even if people believe in pre-marital sex they should not be judged. Thus, although pre-marital sex is against the Christian belief, it is not necessarily against other beliefs. Goode (1997:43) asserts that regardless of whether a given norm applies to all situations or only some, to certain people or to all people, everyone, everywhere is subject to certain norms. To be human means we are subject to the norms of the groups to which we belong, and to those of the societies in which we live.

Just as the same symbols and gestures can have different meanings in different cultural groups, a particular act may be moral in one culture or social setting, but immoral in another. This translates to the fact that teachers may teach different values from the ones that children encounter at home, because values are not universal and final. What is morally right and acceptable for a teacher of one culture or community may not be morally right and acceptable for learners who are from another culture or community. The dilemma this poses on value transmission is that children might be faced with different and conflicting values, which could lead to confusion. Van der Walt (1994:46) poses the following question regarding the transmission of values: "Living in a world replete with contradictory worldviews, and worldviews which have generated into ideologies, how can we know which one is true and reliable?" The answer to this question is not easy. It is suitable for people to know and be sure about what they believe. This conviction will be based on strongly-held values, whatever their origin. According to SACE (2002:37), if your principles are really strong and solid, you should not be alarmed when someone questions or challenges them. Neither should you be afraid if someone tries to convince you to believe in something you do not believe in. What is important is that, although we should have values that guide us in our behaviour and actions, we have to be tolerant of other people's points of view, and guard against ethno-centrism or cultural superiority.

The adherents to moral absolutism on the other hand, argue that moral principles are universal, apply to all people everywhere, regardless of their culture or religion, and are accepted by all people everywhere, e.g. the prohibition of incest, respect, love, etc. (Cook 1999:7). According to this view, all people can be judged according to certain universal moral principles. Cook (1999:18) further indicates that the existence of universally held moral principles is the result of people having a shared capacity for internalizing and seeking moral truths. Moral absolutism thus claims that there is a moral, universal law that guides human nature and human behaviour.

2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT RELIGION

According to Stevenson (2002:113) and Giddens (1993:487) the Middle East gave rise to three of the world's greatest and most influential monotheistic religions namely Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Giddens (1993:455, 456) states that religion, whether monotheistic (the belief that there is only one God) or polytheistic (the belief in several gods) is found in all known human societies and it has had an influence on the lives of human beings for thousands of years. Le Roux (1994:138) states that religion is an extremely important component of man's make-up, and all the nations in the world participate in some form of worship. The origin (etymology) of the term religion seems to be obscure. Some claim the term originates from the Latin word *religare* which means to bind or to reconnect man to the divinity (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion/Etymology>, 2009:1). It thus refers to the binding or reconnection of a person with his or her true origin. Dooyeweerd (in Schoeman 1975:10) defines religion as "the innate impulse of human selfhood to direct itself towards the true or toward a pretended absolute origin of all temporary diversity of meaning, which it finds focused concentrically in itself." It is according to Schoeman (1975:10) integral, universal and radical (deeply rooted) and pertains to the selfhood (heart) of man. According to Fowler (1991:5) the term heart is by far the most common anthropological term in the Bible, and it appears more than a thousand times. It is the religious core in which all human life is integrated. In Scripture it is often stated that it is with the heart that God is served. Religion is all-encompassing and influences a person's actions, life, aspirations, feelings and thoughts. Many human

actions, thoughts and behaviours are thus religiously motivated, whether one is aware of it or not.

Religion, as noted by Roux & Du Preez (2005:273) is not only a means whereby different cultures and people categorize and define human values. It also provides a way to understand diversity in a human being's experiences about life as part of his/her quest for meaning. No culture can exist and develop without a religious (or spiritual) driving force. For the well-known sociologist Emile Durkheim, the reason for religion was that of raising human beings above themselves, of giving them a sense of higher consciousness to try and live their fullest lives morally, and making them lead lives that are superior to those they would lead if they followed their own whims (Aiken 2004:10). Durkheim maintains that religion and morality are closely related, and that religion not only prompts morality, but that morality is the essential nature of religion: religion is equated with the existence of a moral community. Most religions embody values of justice and mercy, love and care, commitment, respect, compassion and co-operation. They chart profound ways of being human towards other humans (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001:44).

As has been stated previously, a life- and worldview is born out of our religious convictions. However, according to Van der Walt (1994:43) our life- and worldview is not grounded in religion only, but may also be the result of factors like our education, the influence of family and friends, and the socio-economical conditions of our environments.

The Essential English Dictionary (2003:65) defines religion as "a belief or worship of a supernatural power or powers considered to be divine or to have control over human destiny." It is the inborn driving force that directs all functions of humanity. For the Christian this supernatural power is God Almighty. Schoeman (1988:113) states that God is the only and ultimate Creator of all things, without whom there would be no reality, instead there would be total chaos. A Christian would thus be someone who sees the world as Christ sees it and who tries to live according to His gospel. One of the

Biblical principles states, for instance, that people should always tell the truth. The Christian would thus attempt to lead a truthful life and tell the truth at all times. This Christian principle, and others mentioned in the Holy Bible, will therefore shape the way Christian people live. Because there is more than one religion, it is to be expected that different people will have different life- and worldviews. People will thus have different interpretations of reality. Even atheists and agnostics have morals and ethical values, which are not derived from any religion. This is possible because the formation of a life- and worldview can happen through factors other than religion, as mentioned above. These factors can, for example, be a person's personality, intellectual development, the prevailing socio-political and socio-cultural conditions in one's community, education by parents, the influence of friends and peers or a person's life experiences and his/her emotional life. One should therefore take into account that a multi-dimensional network of influences are at work in the formation of a life- and worldview (Van der Walt 1994:43-44).

2.4 ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT LIFE- AND WORLDVIEW

According to Van der Walt (1994:95) a life- and worldview (or a philosophy of life) entails a person's life orientation, directional ideas and convictions. It expresses values that relate to different areas of life and is orientated towards life-fulfillment. It is on the basis of these notions that people decide which life practices and forms are important and should be pursued in order to lead a true, meaningful and fulfilling life. A life- and worldview is thus, in the words of Van der Walt (1994:39) an "integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies, shapes, motivates and gives direction and meaning to human activity." A life- and worldview is not only an image of the world but also, according to Van der Walt (1994:41) a blueprint for life in the world. It thus gives a totality perspective on reality. All people, in individual or group context have a life- and worldview that determines their individual and common identity. A person's life- and worldview is guided by what he or she believes in. Religious convictions will thus manifest in a life- and worldview.

As important as it is for people to have a life- and worldview, it is equally important to guard against their life- and worldviews being over-emphasized (or absolutized) at the expense of other life- and worldviews. No one life- or worldview should be regarded as superior to another.

Van der Walt (1994:40-42) highlights the following characteristics of a life- and worldview:

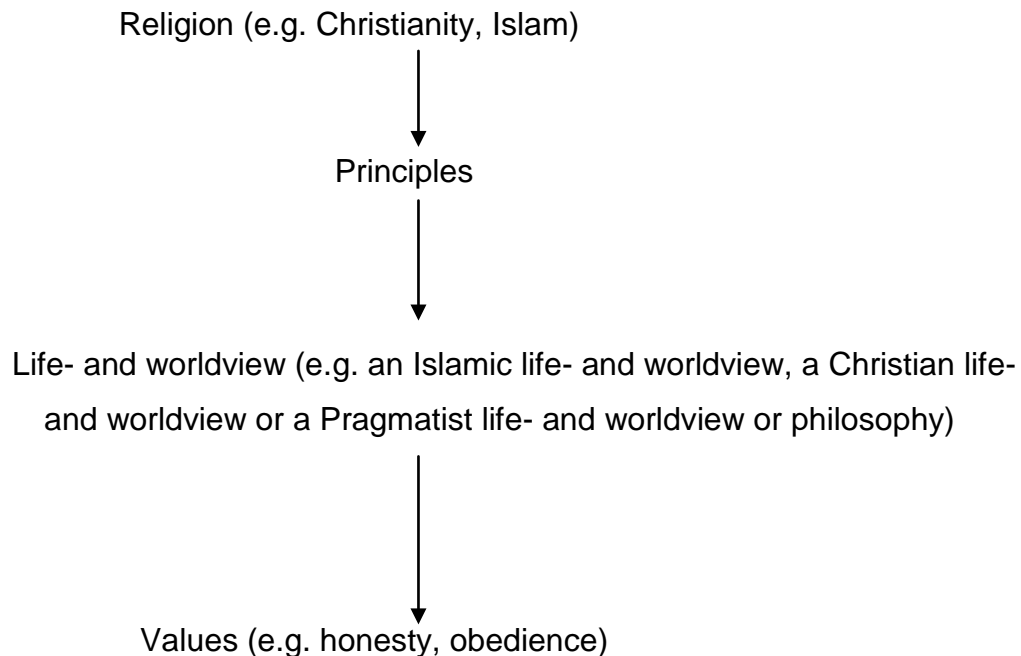
- *It is all-encompassing*, meaning that it encompasses the whole of man's life. It represents perspectives regarding the origin, value, deepest meaning and final destination of us as humans (Broodryk 2005:127).
- *A life- and worldview often includes a specific concept of a (true) god and some conception of normativity*. For the Christian this god will be God, for the Muslim it will be Allah, for the Buddhist it will be Buddha.
- *A life- and worldview is a mode of seeing or looking at something*. It is a mode of looking at the world; it is a perspective, a viewpoint, a lens through which we view reality.
- *It guides and orientates us in our understanding of the world*. A life- and worldview can be compared to a map which helps us determine where we find ourselves, a means of ascertaining our route through life. A life- and worldview therefore, does not create the world of reality, it merely directs us in our understanding of it and our lives in it.
- *It reveals a unity*. A life- and worldview is not simply a random collection of ideas. It is a framework or a system of convictions which cohere in an orderly fashion in a pattern, and which reveals an inner interdependence or consistency.
- *It is both descriptive and prescriptive*. It not only (descriptively) tells us what the world is, but also (prescriptively) tells us how the world should be. It therefore has both a factual and a normative side. It provides standards according to which a distinction can be made between right and wrong, good and evil, order and disorder.
- *A life- and worldview requires total commitment*. If a person or a community fails to commit fully to a life- and worldview, this view, however healthy, cannot take

on shape and form in a concrete way. In contrast, total surrender or commitment means satisfaction, inner joy and peace.

- *It is typically human.* All people have a life- and worldview, but not all people are necessarily aware that they have one. Many people live from an intuitive frame of reference.
- *It is not scientific.* A life- and worldview should not be confused with other sciences such as education or theology. A life- and worldview is not academic knowledge, but rather common sense. The validity of a life- and worldview cannot be proven by way of logical or scientific argumentation.
- *It is a deeply rooted source of action.* A worldview is also a vision of how the world should be changed for the better, and therefore contains transformative power.
- *It is a definite image of reality, and yet fallible.* For the adherents to a life- and worldview it is the truth for them - it is their reality, and they have to live according to it, or at least attempt to. And yet, as a result of human error and because of the fallible nature of man, not all people live according to their life- and worldviews.

The relationship between religion, a life- and worldview and values can schematically be illustrated as follows:

Figure 2.1 The relationship between religion, a life- and worldview and values



2.5 VALUES, MORALITY AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The concept moral ethics can be traced back to philosophers such as Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. One cannot speak of values without implicitly referring to morality and moral development, neither can one mention morality without having values in mind. Moral development is a process that coincides with cognitive development, because children cannot make moral judgments and choices until they have achieved a certain level of cognitive maturity and can shed egocentric thinking (Olds & Papalia 1986:248; Lemmer & Badenhorst 1997:238). Mariaye (2006:22, 64) states that the concept morality is used in many different ways at different times by different people, but it can be interpreted to mean a person's or society's view of what is perceived to be the highest good. The highest good is often defined as a mindset and those actions and behaviours that contribute to what Aristotle refers to as *eudaimonia*, which means happiness, or a sense of well-being. Aiken (2004:v) defines morality or a person's ethical sense as an evaluation of what is good and what is bad in absolute terms. It entails praising what is good and condemning what is bad. Aspin (in Mariaye 2006:64)

concurs that the term morality can be used descriptively to refer to a code of conduct put forward by a society or an individual, and normatively, to refer to a code of conduct that, under specific conditions, would be put forward by all rational-thinking persons. Bottery (1990:27) concedes that there is a need for a simple and understandable morality for society as a whole, one on which all can agree. Individual morality, he claims, like individual choices is fine, but not when it conflicts with the good of society.

2.5.1 Theories on morality and moral development

According to the Essential English Dictionary (2003:816) a theory is “a set of ideas, based on evidence and careful reasoning, which offers an explanation of how something works or why something happens.” There does not however, exist only one theory that is universally accepted by all developmentalists or researchers, nor is there one theory that explains all facets of moral development. Different theorists have different perspectives for looking at the way people develop and behave morally. Different well-known thinkers like Freud, Piaget and Erikson saw mankind through different prisms, and their ideas about our fundamental nature have given rise to various explanations or theories. Six theories which have made important contributions to our beliefs, thinking and behaviour regarding moral development that will be explored in this study are those of Aristotle, Kant, Freud, Piaget, Kohlberg and Durkheim.

2.5.1.1 *Nichomacean Ethics*

Moral or ethical education is considered to have begun with ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle (380-322 BC) is considered to be the most influential philosopher of all times. He wrote about ethics, politics, physics, metaphysics, psychology, biology, logic and literary criticism. Throughout the Middle Ages Aristotle was, according to Stevenson (2002:59) referred to as ‘the philosopher’ and the most respected authority on almost everything. According to Aiken (2004:69) Aristotle’s *Nichomacean Ethics* provides a basis for religious and scholastic teachings on character education. It asserts that virtue and moral reasoning are acquired by imitating ‘good’ role models, obeying ‘good’ laws, and particularly, by means of supervised

practices in desirable conduct. For Aristotle the human experience is holistic: the cognitive capacities function within a wider context of human experience which cannot be described or explained independently of a complex of social, practical, historical and cultural features (Mariaye 2006:67). His ethics are based on such cornerstones as happiness and wisdom, which he claimed could be acquired through education. Aristotle emphasized the important role of the correct moral guidance by parents and teachers from a young age. He claimed that if children are taught correct moral habits from an early age, doing the 'right' thing will become second nature to them. He believed that "we become just by performing just acts, temperate by performing temperate ones, brave by performing brave ones" (Palmer 2001:17). But for an act to be fully moral, Aristotle contended that three conditions are necessary: (a) we must act with knowledge, (b) we must deliberately choose the act for its own sake and (c) the act must spring from a fixed disposition of character (Palmer 2001:18). These three conditions have become accepted as necessary features of moral actions.

Two factors in particular stand out in his philosophy. The one is his view that everything has its own particular purpose that is part of a larger purpose, and that people should keep their purpose in mind as they live their lives (Stevenson 2002:63). His philosophy consists largely of an attempt to ascertain what this purpose is and how it fits together with other interrelated purposes. For Aristotle thinking or (moral) reasoning is what we are meant to do. He believed that human beings are "meant to be philosophers who appreciate the wonder and complexity of existence" (Stevenson 2002:63). A second key aspect of his thinking was logic – the way he looked at words and got them to do what he wanted them to. He used words and logic (reasoning) to separate truthful ideas from erroneous ones (Stevenson 2002:60).

2.5.1.2 *Kantian Ethics*

In his first contribution to moral philosophy, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a German philosopher set out an approach to morality that has become known as Kantian Ethics. Two characteristics of the approach is the value

of respect (which is also emphasized by Kohlberg) and that of duty. Kant indicated that it is important for people to be respected, simply because they are humans. Kant (in Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:194) and (SACE 2002:86) indicated that a person should never be thought of and be treated as a means, but always as an end-in-themselves. We should behave towards others as we would have others behave towards us, because we have a moral duty to do so. By doing their duty, people are behaving morally, but if they neglect their duty, they would be behaving immorally. Kant's importance on respect corresponds with what the South African Constitution of 1996 says about respect and human dignity, namely "everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996:7). Although respect is not explicitly defined in the Constitution, and is not on its own referred to as a value in the sense that other values are defined, it is implicit in the way the Bill of Rights governs not only the state's relationship with citizens, but citizens' relationship with one another. Ironically in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001:45) it is stated that research conducted on values and education shows that the two values people feel are most lacking in schools are respect and dialogue. Schools cannot function effectively if there is no mutual respect among learners and among educators and learners. According to Mariaye (2006:66) Kantian Ethics present duty as another fundamental moral motivation. A moral action is 'good' to the extent that it involves a person's doing, or trying to do his or her duty.

2.5.1.3 *The Freudian psycho-analytic theory*

Although Freud (1856-1939) is more famous for his interpretation of dreams and for his theory on sexual development and unconscious thinking, his theories are relevant to moral development and morality. He claimed that people are always in conflict with their natural, sexual instincts and the constraints imposed on them by society. People have sexual urges, but often the moral codes of society prevent them from satisfying their needs. Frustration occurs when these needs are not met. Freud was an Austrian physician and neurologist and is globally known as the father of psycho-analysis. He

theorized that the source of a person's ethical sense or his/her morality is found in the development of a part of the personality known as the *super-ego* (Aiken 2004:31). According to Freud the human personality or psyche is made up of three conflicting aspects, namely the *id*, *ego* and *super-ego* (Louw 1987:104-105). The *id* (which is already present at birth) is the unconscious and impulsive source of motives and desires which operates on the 'pleasure principle'; it strives for immediate gratification of the individual's needs, such as the need for food, and disregards all consequences. The *ego* (which develops by the end of the first year) represents reason or common sense and the obstacles faced in reality. It develops when gratification is delayed; it operates on the 'reality principle' and seeks an acceptable and moral way to obtain gratification. The *ego* is in service of the *id* and is capable of postponing a person's desires so that he or she can, in the long run obtain more pleasure. The *super-ego* (which develops from the age of four or five) was seen by Freud as a person's conscience, and incorporates the morals of society, largely through identification with the parent of the same sex (Olds & Papalia 1986:16-17). The *super-ego* is representative of society's moral principles and functions according to the 'morality principle'. The *super-ego* serves to 'punish' the person for any forbidden urges or wishes by making him or her feel guilty. Consequently, the energy that is related to these wishes is not utilized and keeps having an influence on a person's behaviour.

2.5.1.4 *Durkheim's theory on morality*

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) was a French sociologist and well-known author, and is regarded as the father of the Sociology of Education. With Karl Marx, Max Weber and Herbert Spencer he can be considered as one of the founders of modern sociology (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emile_Durkheim, 2008:1). Some of his work focused on the relationship between religion and morality, because he placed both in a social context (Mariaye 2006:83; Giddens 1993:465). He emphasized the close relationship between religion and morality, the former giving the latter a sacred base, and thus a transcendental authority. The aim of religion was for Durkheim that of raising human beings above themselves, in other words, to encourage them to lead exemplary

lives, which would not otherwise have been the case if they followed no religion. Thus, for a society to be moral, it needs a religious driving force. According to Durkheim morality has the dual task of offering the justification for moral precept as well as accounting for moral change (Palmer 2001:166). He believed that the actual content of morality was relative and that each society had a system which fitted its own needs. The important ideas are those that are shared by an entire society, because these ideas make communication and harmony possible (Stevenson 2002:205). Durkheim noted that morality resulted from social interaction or immersion in a group. For him society is like a living creature, and everything that happens in a society is its parts, and the parts work together to form an entire society. Through participation and co-existence in societies people are predisposed to look at the world in a collective way and develop cognitive and moral perspectives and practices, as required by that particular society.

2.5.1.5 *The Piagetian cognitive approach*

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a Swiss psychologist who applied his knowledge of biology, philosophy, logic and psychology to the study of children at play. He ultimately transformed people's perceptions about the way children think and behave. He indicated that a child's thinking about moral dilemmas qualitatively differs from an adult's and that children perceive and experience the world differently from adults. Piaget found that young children regard rules as fixed and absolute. They believe that rules are handed down by adults or by God and that they cannot be changed. Older children understand that rules are not sacred and absolute, but that they are devices which humans use to get along cooperatively in their everyday interaction with one another (<http://www.faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/Kohlberg.htm>, 2007). Piaget's interest was not as much in whether children can solve problems correctly or accurately but in why they behave in certain ways, and the type of reasoning that motivates them (Louw 1987:203; Lemmer & Badenhorst 1997:228). He was thus interested in how children think. One of the assumptions of his theory on moral development is that it is dependent on the cognitive maturity of the child, because for a child to be able to distinguish between right and wrong he or she must be capable of proper judgment, which is a

direct outcome of his/her reasoning (Mariaye 2006:75). Children who are not intellectually mature, e.g. those in the sensori-motor stage, should not be held responsible for their inability to make moral decisions, because during this phase they mainly learn through trial and error. From his observations he concluded that cognitive or intellectual development takes place in different stages. Each stage represents a qualitative change from one type of thought or behaviour to another. Such stage theories have certain characteristics: all individuals go through the same stages in the same order, even though the actual time may vary from one person to the other, making any age demarcation only approximate (Olds & Papalia 1986:14-15; Louw 1987:203-204). Each stage builds on the previous one and constructs the foundation for the one that follows. Piaget distinguished between the following four major stages through which human cognitive development progresses:

- *The sensori-motor stage* (birth to two years): infants acquire knowledge about the world through their senses and their motor activity. The infant learns by means of trial and error and simple problem-solving. The major cognitive acquisition during this stage is the realization that the world is a permanent place and that people, places and things in it continue to exist even when they are out of view.
- *The pre-operational stage* (two to seven years): during this stage the child develops a representational system and uses symbols such as words to represent people, places and events. However, the child's thinking and behaviour are still immature. Because of his or her egocentric nature, the child has difficulty considering other people's points of view.
- *The concrete-operational stage* (seven to eleven years): the child begins to understand and use concepts that help him/her to deal with the immediate environment. He or she can solve problems logically if they are focused on actual things and events in the here and now. The most important cognitive skill that is acquired is conservation, which is the realization that two things that started off the same remain the same even if they are made to look different, as long as nothing has been added or taken away from them.

- *The formal-operational stage* (twelve to fifteen years): the child can think in abstract terms and deals with hypothetical situations. He/she is able to consider many possibilities and solve complex problems in a systematic way. Not until adolescents have attained the formal-operational stage can they reach the highly advanced stages of moral development. People have to be capable of abstract reasoning to understand moral principles (Olds & Papalia 1986:328; Giddens 1993:73-74).

2.5.1.6 *Kohlberg's theory of moral development*

According to Lawrence Kohlberg's (1927-1987) theory, which was based on Piaget's stages of cognitive development, morality or autonomous moral principles are the highest level of moral development characterized by self-accepted moral principles according to which we are raised and decide to internalize. Moral development is related to cognitive development and it proceeds in a definite sequential pattern. The idea that there are stages of moral development that can be linked to age has been explored in great detail by Kohlberg, who was a psychologist and Professor of education. Kohlberg focused on moral development and he proposed a stage theory of moral thinking which goes beyond Piaget's initial formulations (<http://www.faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/Kohlberg.htm>, 2007:1). He described three levels of moral development namely the pre-conventional, the conventional and the post-conventional levels (SACE 2002:126; Olds & Papalia 1986:15-16).

- *Level 1 (pre-conventional morality)*: Kohlberg called this level pre-conventional because children do not yet reason and behave as independent members of society because they are too young to reason logically. The child assumes that authorities and adults hand down a fixed set of rules which he or she must unquestioningly obey (<http://www.faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/Kohlberg.htm>, 2007:3). Therefore they see morality as something external to themselves. This stage is similar to Piaget's first stage of moral thinking and is characteristic of children of up to the age of about eleven. According to Kohlberg children at this level are responsive to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right and

wrong, but interpret these labels in terms of either the physical consequences of their actions (punishment and reward) or in terms of the physical power of those making the rules (parents, teachers, their peer group, society). Children observe the standards of others only to reap rewards or to avoid punishment.

- *Level 2 (conventional morality)*: this level is characteristic of children between the ages of eleven and fifteen years, where they think and reason as members of society with its values, norms and expectations. Here the child is concerned with meeting the expectations of the family, teachers, peer groups and society, and actively supports the dominant social order. At this stage children often identify with role models who represent their expectations. They operate according to the standards of others and consider what they can do for other people to be considered virtuous by them. Children at this stage thus see morality as more than simple deals.
- *Level 3 (post-conventional morality)*: this stage becomes evident after the age of about fifteen years. The young adult can now demonstrate a clear effort to define moral values and to behave according to ethical principles (although they often don't). He or she engages in logical reasoning and thinking oriented towards justice and based on a strong social contract or agreement. Because they become independent, the young adult often chooses these values for him/herself, irrespective of the authority of the group or people advocating these values/principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups. The young people begin to understand that every society has its own definition of right and wrong, and what is acceptable in one society may be considered a sin, or is unacceptable in another.

The identified ages were, according to Kohlberg only a rough guideline, although he was strongly committed to the reality and universality of these progressive levels. His assumption about moral development was that it is 'framed' by these levels of logical reasoning. It is based on Piaget's work on cognitive development and implies that a child can only engage in the higher forms of moral reasoning if he/she has the necessary cognitive equipment (SACE 2002:127).

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the concept values and other related concepts namely religion and life- and worldview were defined and explained. The concept morality was discussed, and the importance and manner in which values and morality contribute to the positive moral development for society. Six theories that have made significant contributions to our beliefs regarding moral development were explored.

The next chapter will explore some of the factors that contribute to the moral decay of the South African society.

CHAPTER 3

THE MORAL DEGENERATION OF THE PRESENT-DAY SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the introductory orientation to this research project it is stated that the South African society is currently facing a moral crisis. This moral crisis has negative implications for the society as a whole, also for education. Pretorius (1998:22) states that when society is viewed from a socio-pedagogic perspective social phenomena present in that society that could influence education by either enhancing it or impeding it, are investigated. These factors, which have a negative impact on society and on the relationship between educators and learners are, amongst others, the lack of discipline, violence, selfishness, sexual licentiousness and substance abuse. Moral degeneration is often the cause that the climate needed for effective education and for harmonious co-existence in society is lost.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate some of the negative factors which are generally related to a lack of values that contribute to the moral decay of the South African society.

3.2 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MORAL DEGENERATION

3.2.1 Unwillingness to adhere to values

It has previously been stated that there is a general decline in the adherence to values like respect, politeness and consideration. This decline has a negative effect on the healthy functioning of a society and responsible citizenship, because no society can

survive and thrive without a moral order or moral code. The Confucian Eastern philosophy emphasizes the importance of social harmony to individual desires – we should act in harmony with society. If one's actions are in harmony with the rest of society, they are moral actions, and you are considered a 'good' person (Stevenson 2002:28). The Educational Policies Commission (1951:3-4) also states that

“the allegiance of the individual to commonly approved moral standards is necessary. No social invention, however ingenious, no improvements in government structure, however prudent, no enactment of statutes and ordinances, however lofty their aims, can produce a good and secure society if personal integrity, honesty, and self-discipline are lacking.”

The lack of a proper value system leads to, amongst others, selfishness, cruelty, dishonesty, greed, heartlessness, disrespectfulness, and a loss of integrity. People who display these traits easily turn violent, lapse into criminal activities, abuse their bodies and become corrupt. This leads to a general deterioration of harmonious and peaceful co-existence in society. Violence and crime, especially, seem to be out of control. South Africa is regarded as one of the countries with the highest crime rate in the world. Without peaceful co-existence people cannot live happily in their societies, they do not feel safe and schools and other societal structures cannot function effectively. In order to avoid these destructive habits children need to be educated about values and the importance of being able to make sound moral decisions. However, as has been stated in Chapter 2, not only do children have to be taught what values are - they also need to know why it is important to practice these values, and what the implications are of their refusal to practice them.

3.2.2 Secularization

The lack of a value system is closely linked to secularization, which generally refers to the process of transformation by which a society migrates from a close identification with religion or religious institutions to a more separated relationship (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularization>, 2008:1). Secularization can be interpreted

as a decline in religion or religious beliefs. Hirst (1974:1) states that secularization takes many forms and is obvious in many aspects of society. Religion, which for many people forms the foundation for values, and positive values do not seem to play an important role in the lives of many people, especially the younger generation. We therefore seem to be living in a world where religion and positive values have become increasingly irrelevant. Young children have little respect for others, for other people's possessions, their own possessions, for authority, for themselves, and for human life. They are generally able to distinguish between right and wrong but prefer to do the wrong thing, simply because they can, and because they are often not held responsible for their actions. According to Middleton & Welsh (in Wolhuter & Steyn 2003:531) and Carl & Johannes (2002:162) modernization, accompanied by advancement in technology, the absence of a value system as well as the context of political change in South Africa and the lack of discipline in schools, have left many young people dispirited, despondent and hopeless. They often act out their hopelessness in violent ways, they commit crime, abuse drugs and alcohol, do not respect their teachers and parents, and engage in pre-marital and unprotected sex at a very young age. Their sexual activities very often lead to unwanted pregnancies and are a contributing factor in the escalating HIV/AIDS pandemic. These young people then often display the same behaviour when they become adults. Their children learn or copy their behaviour, which in turn leads to a vicious, never-ending circle of undisciplined behaviour, lack of respect, sexual licentiousness, violence and substance abuse. All of these factors are contributors to immorality and the value-crisis in society. What is worrying is the fact that these immoral lifestyles are often accepted as the norm by some members of society. Many young adolescents see nothing wrong with smoking and abusing drugs. They sanction promiscuity, being pregnant at a young age, often out of wedlock and often by married men. They also sanction being disrespectful to their peers and elders. Shaw & Wood (2003:1, 5) claim that children appear to be functioning at an acceptable cognitive and social level, but that they clearly have not developed a solid basis of moral and emotional control if so many of them attack their peers, their parents and other people in society. Large numbers of young people often no longer develop the empathy, moral commitment and ability to love, all of which are necessary to maintain the society. Their

emotional, psychological and moral well-being has reached a frighteningly low point, and it would require a powerful mind-shift to save children and the society as a whole.

3.2.3 The disintegration of family and community life

As has been indicated in Chapter 1, the family is the child's primary educational institution. It is in the family where the child first learns what is socially acceptable because parents consciously or unconsciously convey their views, preferences and values to their children. It is also in the family where the child discovers the meaning, sense and purpose of his/her own life and of his/her existence in his/her family and in the community (Pretorius 1998:45). But when the family structure breaks down or disintegrates, the community will also not escape this disintegration. In this regard Pretorius (1998:56) and Giddens (1993:53) state that the present-day family has become very vulnerable, which leads to the disintegration of family life. There are many reasons for the breakdown of the family, and some of these reasons can be traced as far back as the Industrial Revolution. Before the Industrial Revolution the extended family, which consisted of a number of families, was the most important form of society. The pre-industrial community was smaller and had a self-supporting economy. These communities were characterized by economic, emotional, social, role and pedagogical security, and the stability of the family (Steyn in Pretorius 1998:56-57).

The Industrial Revolution, including industrial labour and urbanization drastically changed the structure of the family as well as its stability. During the Industrial Revolution families moved to industrial areas to look for work. This resulted in a change of the family structure: the nuclear family became removed and isolated from the extended family and started functioning as a separate unit. According to Pretorius (1998:57) the present-day nuclear family is:

- *Economically vulnerable.* In times of need and difficulty, e.g. unemployment, illness or death, the family is dependent on itself.
- *Socially vulnerable.* In many families there is a lack of social control, resulting in instability. In the 'closed' family with its personal relationships, the family members are only dependent on one another.

- *Emotionally vulnerable.* Traumatic experiences like death and divorce are characterized by intense emotionality. This puts enormous pressure on family members and family life.
- *Pedagogically vulnerable.* The family is vulnerable in respect of the parent-child relationship in educating the child. Outside influences make family life pedagogically vulnerable. Modern technology, including the internet also contributes to pedagogical vulnerability. Children grow up owning cellular phones, watching violent video games, and they very often have unsupervised access to the internet. Children are known to use cell phones to record one another having sex and to organize cocaine parties. Easy access to the internet makes it easy for children to watch pornography and to engage in on-line dating encounters. Because parents are not always at home with their children, many are unaware of how their children spend their leisure time.
- *Vulnerable in respect of role differentiation or role uncertainty.* One or both parents may be 'absent' due to the fact that it is a single-parent family, or because of work responsibilities. This means that many children grow up in the absence of appropriate role models, and their socialization may be hampered because there is inadequate contact between parent and child.

3.2.4 The link between crime and the growing emphasis on own selfish desires

According to the media it seems as if South Africans are becoming selfish, greedy, brutal, careless and without conscience (see Chapter 1). Killing or injuring people for pleasure or for a few material possessions and because they can get away with it is not an unusual occurrence. We live in a society that is characterized by greedy materialism and consumerism, which have a negative influence on children (and adults). Consumerism is the equating of personal happiness with the purchasing of material possessions and consumption (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumerism>, 2008:1). Emphasis on wealth and status is increasingly becoming more important than values. People will commit any crime, like stealing, or even commit murder for a few material

possessions and to satisfy their own selfish desires. The growing emphasis on selfish desires is thus closely linked to criminal and other immoral acts.

It was indicated that society is in decay due to a lack of values, which may manifest itself in anti-social behaviour. One of the indications of anti-social behaviour is by committing crimes and acting immorally. Politicians, religious leaders and social commentators have all spoken out against the breakdown in morality in South Africa, as is indicated by the high crime rate (<http://www.iss.org.za/pubs/CrimeQ/No.11/Rauch.htm>, 2006:1). Already in 1998 Ginsberg (1998:39) painted a clear but disturbing picture of the nature and seriousness of crime in South Africa when he reported that:

“Currently, a serious crime is committed every 17 seconds in South Africa, a murder every half an hour, a housebreaking every two minutes, and an assault every three minutes. At present only 77 people are arrested for every 1000 crimes committed. A mere 22 percent of reported crimes are ever prosecuted. Our prisons cannot even cope with those who are convicted. With more than 4 in every 1000 citizens in jail, South Africa qualifies as one of the nations with the highest proportion of people in jail.”

He further stated that “it is becoming even clearer that South Africa’s crime wave continues to spiral out of control” (Ginsberg 1998:52). The White Paper on Correctional Services (2005:50) concedes that at the end of the first decade of democracy South Africa had one of the world’s highest ratios of offender population in relation to the actual population total. In a comparative study between South Africa and the United Kingdom (UK) it was found that 4 out of every 1000 South Africans are in correctional centers, whereas in the UK the figure was found to be 1.25 out of every 1000 UK citizens. In two thirds of the world’s countries, there is less than 1.5 out of every 1000 citizens in correctional centers.

Newspaper articles and headlines such as the following substantiate how badly our society has broken down because of criminal and immoral activities: “My three uncles

raped me" (Sunday Sun, 28 May 2006); "Be aware of prostitutes" (Sunday Sun, 28 May 2006); "Directors suspended for corruption" (City Press, 21 May 2006); "Pregnant mom shoots her unborn baby" (Drum, 25 May 2006); "Cell phone porn: cop's sex with teenager" (*You*, 1 June 2006); "Bail for bigwig accused of raping, stabbing wife" (City Press, 28 May 2006); "Rape week at Rhodes ends – with a third rape victim" (Daily Dispatch, 24 May 2007); "Farmer 'chained' workers" (Daily Dispatch, 7 February 2008); "My lover molested my child" (*You*, 31 May 2007); "SA's deepening drug crisis: it's worse than you thought" (*You*, 7 June 2007); "My husband's affairs on Mxit" (*You*, 31 May 2007); and "Women murdered, minced, made into sausages" (*You*, 8 February 2007).

These headlines are a disturbing indication that crime in South Africa seems to be out of control. Almost every day the news is dominated by crime reports like these mentioned above. This moral disintegration of society holds potential implications for the well-being of our children and for the future of the country. Crime has a negative impact on the South African economy, including productivity, investment, tourism and quality of life. It also hampers the political stability of the country (Bornman, Van Eden & Wentzel 1998:i). In addition, crime and violence have psychological, social and emotional implications for the victims, their families and for others in society who are affected: it causes stress, suspicion and fear in people, and it can also lead to the disintegration of family and community life.

Criminologists agree that it is not easy to pinpoint reasons why people commit crimes and why they engage in immoral acts, because different people behave differently under different circumstances (Pharoah 2005:10). Some people commit crimes for selfish reasons like greed, some do it for survival, while some commit crimes or behave immorally because of peer-pressure.

Socio-education includes the study of social and deviant behavior which is not in accordance with the current, accepted norms and values of a particular society (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:33). According to Goode (1997:33) criminology focuses on

'hard' deviance, that is, those activities of which the enactment is likely to result in arrest and imprisonment, for example, robbery, rape, murder and burglary. These crimes are most prevalent among young men aged between 15 and 24 (Pharoah 2005:7). The White Paper on Correctional Services (2005:78-79) confirms this when it states that this is the category of the South African population that has been growing rapidly in the first decade of democratic South Africa. Many researchers agree that the high crime rate in South Africa is one of the signs that our society is deteriorating. Prinsloo (2005) states that because children are not adequately guided to realize their full potential, they tend to adopt anti-social attitudes when they reach adulthood. Louw (1989:113) indicates that research has shown that children from anti-social homes have a greater chance of imitating their parents' behaviour when they grow up. It is, however, important to take note that there are other factors as well that cause people to commit crimes, or to behave immorally. These factors include poverty, social exclusion and a lack of training and work opportunities. According to Frank (2005:16) other risk factors associated with crime are:

- family disruption;
- violence;
- poor parenting;
- poverty;
- inadequate housing and health conditions;
- poor schooling;
- truancy;
- school drop-out or exclusion;
- unemployment and financial hardship;
- peer group activities and pressure;
- (racial and gender) discrimination; and
- a lack of training and work opportunities.

Crime affects everyone in the country, and the effects thereof on any society can only be negative. If crime is not brought under control in South Africa, it will have far-reaching consequences for the country. Many youths of South Africa could end up as

drug addicts, violent criminals and anti-social individuals (Pillay as cited by De Wet 2003b:168).

Violence and crime terrify everyone and shatters the sense of order, routine and predictability that make us feel safe. We hear and read about shootings, rape, child abuse and murders almost every day. As was mentioned earlier, this causes anxiety and stress in people, especially if they had witnessed or were victims of these criminal acts (Bornman *et al* 1998:1). Even those who have not been directly affected by crime fear that they may be the next victim. Fear of crime has pervasive effects on people's social and personal lives. The media presents an image of people incapacitated and inhibited by fear – they avoid going out at night, limit their social activities and lock themselves up in their homes. This fear of crime manifests itself in stress, especially in vulnerable members of society which include women, children and the elderly, who believe that they will be unable to protect themselves against victimization. In response to the brutal murder of a defenseless 3 year old girl in the Free State on 25 December 2009, the MEC for Police, Roads and Transport Mr Thabo Manyoni stated that as far as crime is concerned, the root of the problem is moral degeneration. He sanctioned for better and more effective cooperation between communities, the police and churches (Volksblad, 9 January 2010).

3.2.5 Moral disintegration and the resultant substance abuse

Substance abuse is one of the consequences of a society without values. Goode (1997:170) claims that humans have ingested drugs for thousands of years. Alcohol was consumed in Stone Age societies even before the fashioning of metals. Archeologists found strands from a marijuana plant embedded in Chinese pottery thousands of years old. Statues of figures depicted chewing cocoa leaves which contain cocaine were dug up from South American graves that pre-date the arrival of Columbus by hundreds of years. Pretorius (1998:262) states that although drug abuse is a phenomenon as old as mankind, this problem has never been such a pandemic threat to society than towards the end of the twentieth century.

Substance abuse, according to Goode (1997:170) is a universal problem. Alcoholism is a disease and a condition resulting from the excessive consumption of alcohol, which can lead to social, mental and physical impairment. The excessive drinking of alcohol, especially teenage alcoholism and drug abuse are becoming huge social problems, especially in the 21st century. These days drugs and alcohol are more readily available, even to children as young as eight years. The following shocking report was published in the *You* (7 June, 2007):

“Kids of four smoking dagga. A nine-year old on crack cocaine. An eight-year old peddler working for Nigerians and selling drugs on the school playground. This may sound like something from a Hollywood movie but it's the stark reality of South Africa today.”

The article claims that drug dealers are getting younger, with the youngest known dealer in Johannesburg being an eight year old boy. He was targeted by Nigerians who gave him pills and dagga to sell at his school.

Pretorius (1998:262) claims that drugs, especially, are ideal commodities because they are light in weight, easy to transport or hide, reach high prices, the demands exceed the supply, and little is wasted. This makes it easy for children to hide drugs in their bags when they go to school. In the *People* (4 August 2006) it was stated that there is an increasing phenomenon of schoolboys using anabolic steroids and related steroids substances, with one of the possible side-effects being aggression. It has become a common occurrence for children to take substances to school, in South Africa and in other countries. Wilson, Gottfredson & Najaka (2001:247-248) report that in 1999 in the United States, 42% of Grade 12 students said that they had used illicit drugs in the previous twelve months, and 74% reported having used alcohol. The question is not whether the use of substance abuse is increasing, but whether people are more likely to commit crimes or behave aggressively when they are intoxicated. It was reported by Matzopoulos (2005:25) that alcohol was an important risk factor for murder, with the highest percentage of alcohol-related cases being reported in Cape Town. According to Sears, Peplau & Taylor (1991:349) intoxicated offenders commit as much as 60% of the

murders in the United States, and comparably high proportions of other violent crimes such as rape, robbery, assault, domestic violence and child abuse. Thus, there seems to be a correlation between crime and the use of substances. Tshwete (in De Wet 2003b:170) supports this when he states that “drugs serve as a catalyst for a large number of violent crimes, which have an organized dimension, and are often committed by drug addicts for the sake of satisfying their expensive dependency.” Many young adults turn to prostitution in order to pay their drug-related debts. During the past few years, a moral panic has been seen about teenage drinking and other substance abuse, which is characterized as a specific aspect of a more general breakdown in the order of society. The reasons for this substance abuse are numerous and include peer pressure, rebellion and easy access to substances.

3.2.6 The link between moral and sexual licentiousness and the HIV/AIDS pandemic

The number of people living with AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa shows no evidence of decline (UNAIDS/WHO, 2006:17), as more and more people are infected every day. Because of this, statistics on HIV/AIDS change regularly. These statistics are of huge concern, both to the national and the international population. UNAIDS/WHO (2006:15) estimates that a little more than one-tenth of the world's population lives in sub-Saharan Africa. At the end of 2005 an estimated 24.5 million (64%) of infected adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. During the same year, an estimated 2 million people died from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa (<http://www.avert.org/subaadults.htm>, 2007:1; UNAIDS/WHO, 2006:13). In addition, the epidemic has created a cumulative total of almost 14 million AIDS orphans, with 2 million of these orphans being in South Africa. Given the number of people infected and dying, South Africa is regarded as having the most severe HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world (UNAIDS/WHO, 2006:15).

The worst affected orphans are those from deeply impoverished homes. They lose their health (through infection, inadequate nutrition, and poor health care), their livelihoods (through the illness and death of breadwinners and working adults), their parents

(through illness and death), their families (as they are separated from caregivers and siblings and send to stay with other relatives or caregivers) and their social networks. A combination of factors seem to be responsible for this high infection rate, which includes the low status of women, poverty and social instability, high levels of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), sexual violence, promiscuity, licentiousness, and high mobility (particularly migrant labour) and some people still denying the existence of HIV/AIDS. There are also other factors which contribute to the spreading of HIV-infections. These include rapid social transition and extensive violence against women and children, which creates social instability. The transport systems, especially the taxi system in South Africa, make it difficult for people who live in remote areas to visit hospitals or clinics for treatment or to be tested (Le Roux 1994:265).

The HIV/AIDS pandemic shows that we are dealing with a moral crisis in our country. Yet, despite the worrying statistics and the devastating consequences associated with HIV/AIDS, many people (especially those who are unmarried or who are not in monogamous, committed relationships) still seem unable to engage in safe or protected sex, or seem unable to abstain from sex. Although condoms do not guarantee safety, they do minimize the spreading of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Educating our youth about HIV/AIDS and sex is at best only part of the answer - the youth must also be taught to respect themselves, to respect others, to respect their bodies, and about the rights of girls and women.

Young people especially, are becoming increasingly promiscuous and licentious, which can increase their risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS. In a national survey conducted in 2001, it was found that one third of all youths between the ages of 12 and 17 have had sex (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001:71). Children as young as 8 years have partners and are already engaging in sexual activities. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001:71) also indicates that

“Every expression of passion in the contemporary world is overclouded in some way by the knowledge of a deathly syndrome that, in a grim irony,

thrives – depends – on the alluring intimacy of sex. And the age at which young people are experiencing their first intimate relations is falling steadily.”

Many people (youngsters and adults) opt to have unprotected sex, though they are aware of the dangers involved. Infidelity among partners is also a major moral concern in the spreading of HIV/AIDS. Except for the fact that AIDS has killed and continues to kill many people daily, there is a myth among black South African men that having unprotected sex with a virgin will cure them if they (the men) are infected with HIV/AIDS. This myth leads to immoral sexual behaviour committed by many men who are infected. Babies as young as 9 months old have been reported to have been raped by men, all in the name of purifying or curing them from the disease. These men are so driven by selfishness and heartlessness that nothing will stand in the way of their own self-interest. Some people who are aware that they are HIV-positive have unprotected sex with partners in order to infect them. This is usually done because the infected partner wants to avenge the person who has infected him/her. The moral question that can be asked is whether it is fair to infect an innocent person with a deadly disease, all for the sake of revenge? Also, many married people have extra-marital affairs, and often fail to use condoms while engaging in extra-marital sex. Their immoral behaviour also contributes to the rapid spread of the disease. This means that even married couples cannot claim to be immune against being infected by their partners.

Young people often, for various reasons, prostitute themselves. According to Giddens (1993:202) most prostitutes are female. Some prostitutes do not practice safe sex, thereby contributing to the spreading of the virus, other STDs and unwanted pregnancies.

Although the media warns about unprotected sex and HIV/AIDS, it is also often the media that exposes children to sex. Many children experiment with sex out of curiosity after watching films that contain sex scenes.

3.2.7 Emphasis on individual human rights and children's rights

After many years of apartheid South Africa became a democratic republic in 1994. Rambiyana, Kok & Myburgh (1996:191) and (The Essential English Dictionary 2003:198) assert that a democracy is a system of government in which the citizens are represented in structures that are responsible for decisions that affect everybody according to an agreed upon Constitution of that country.

Human rights are defined as universally accepted principles of justice that are awarded to people simply because they are people (Coetzee 2001:151). Examples of human rights are political, civil, and economic rights, the right to freedom of speech, to a fair trial, to education, and the right to freedom of movement. In addition to these rights, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) also identifies the rights of children which include, amongst others, the right to

- a name and nationality from birth;
- family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
- be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation; and
- basic nutrition and shelter.

In a democracy people are supposed to live democratically: they are given rights and these rights have to be protected. There is therefore an inseparable link between democracy and human rights. In the preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:1) it is stated that

“We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.”

According to the Constitution (1996:5) the state must respect, promote, protect and fulfill the rights stipulated in The Bill of Rights. The Human Rights Commission was established to

- promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights;
- promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights; and
- monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic (the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:78).

These rights are accompanied by obligations and responsibilities, because freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility. When people exercise their human rights they should be considerate and guard against hurting and harming others. For example, everyone has the right to freedom of speech, but this does not mean that one has the right to defame another. In a democratic country such as South Africa it is important for children and adults to be aware of their rights. The school has to educate learners about human rights, and also educate them about the relationship between these rights and how they should be accompanied by responsibilities.

According to the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001:53) the Government gives children too many rights without explaining the role of respecting others in exercising these rights. Because of this children's rights are perceived to undermine adult authority over child rearing, leaving adults feeling powerless to guide children in a world characterized by high levels of change (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001:53). De Klerk & Rens (2003:360) concede that children should have rights and freedom of choice, but not freedom from the consequences of their choices.

3.3 THE MORAL CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The problem of discipline and disruptive behaviour in South African schools is not a new phenomenon. During the apartheid era Africans (Blacks) and other non-White racial groups were oppressed, discriminated against and treated unfairly by the oppressive

Verwoerdian Government. Protests erupted in schools, particularly in the 70s and 80s because learners were dissatisfied with the education system. Today schools are still breeding grounds for violence. Although the reasons for the current moral crisis seem to be different from those that prompted violence during apartheid, a culture of crime and violence still prevails in South African education (De Wet 2003a:113). Juvenile crime, (which is committed by children under the age of 18) in and out of the school is rampant and out of control in South African schools. Pretorius (1998:289) asserts that it is evident to sociologists and criminologists that there is an increase in juvenile delinquency in modern South Africa. He further states that a few decades ago juvenile delinquency mainly referred to theft by children, but in many societies there is an alarming increase in more serious offences like violence, aggressive behaviour, sexual misconduct, drug abuse and vandalism. The possession and the use of drugs/alcohol is, according to the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996 (1996:A-96) prohibited in South African schools.

According to Middleton & Welsh (in Wolhuter & Steyn 2003:531) modernization in society has left an emptiness and uncertainty in the lives of many a dispirited and hopeless young person. These children often act out their hopelessness, sometimes in violent ways. In the *Huisgenoot* (14 August, 2006) it was reported that a matriculant mercilessly attacked another boy at school. The attacked boy sustained skull fractures. The *People* (4 August, 2006) reported the tragic death of a schoolboy from a Durban high school who was attacked by his friend. This incident did not happen on the school premises but at a party during a weekend. Prof Maree, an Educational Psychologist at the University of Pretoria states in the *Huisgenoot* of 14 August 2006 that crime among children is escalating. Apparently this escalation in criminal activities among children, whether they occur at school or not, is not limited to children from poor communities where the social conditions could be blamed. Mention is made in the article of four young people who tortured a mouse and set it on fire – all four children came from middle class families in Johannesburg, and attended private schools. The children were laughing during this horrific incident which shocked South Africans nationwide. While physical violence, bullying (which also includes verbal abuse), aggression and crime are constantly increasing among youngsters, discipline and respect are decreasing. Some

blame the media for the escalating violence among the youth, stating that children are constantly exposed to it. Since children often learn by what they see, they often imitate the behaviour or acts they see on TV or in their communities. Physical violence among teenagers is a serious problem in South Africa, but is often dismissed as a normal part of growing up. According to an article in the *People* (4 August, 2006) statistics reveal that one in nine teenagers who were involved in fights suffered injuries that required medical treatment. In some cases the injuries were so severe that they were fatal. The same article reports that in 2001 in De Aar, a 14 year old teenager was arrested for the murder of another teenager, also 14, following an argument. In 2005 police arrested a 16 year old youth in Kwazulu-Natal in connection with stabbing another teenager to death for her cell phone. In the same year, seven teenagers (aged between 15 and 17) were arrested for brutally assaulting a 21 year old Standerton taxi driver before leaving him for dead at the side of the road.

A new trend in some schools is what is called “cocaine parties”. These parties are often organized via MXIT by children while they are at school (Herald, 23 February 2007). According to an article in the *You* (31 May, 2007) MXit is a popular chat service that mainly attracted teenagers when it was first launched in 2005. But currently more than 75% of its users in South Africa are older than 18 years. At two cents a message (at the time of publication of the article) it is the cheapest way of communicating by cell phone. Learners chat with one another at school and organize parties. The parties are hosted at different venues where cocaine and other drugs are available. In the *Vrouekeur* of 1 December 2006 an article was written on how schools struggle with the cell phone craze. While children do use cell phones to communicate with, for example, their parents, they also use them to spread pornography; they take pictures of one another urinating and they often record fights. The article reported about girls from Bloemfontein who taped their friends while strip-dancing. These videos are then often distributed among learners in schools. Teachers complain that learners SMS one another during classes, thereby not paying attention to lessons. Because many schools do not have a policy about cell phones, teachers often do not know how to handle these situations.

Parents are sometimes afraid to send their children to school and teachers are scared to go to school, because many schools are no longer safe and secure institutions of teaching and learning, but instead, are places where learners sometimes use substances, intimidate teachers, talk on their cell phones, and where learners fight - schools have turned into battlefields and breeding-grounds for criminal activities.

Bullying in schools is also another disturbing factor. Some blame the parents for their children who turn out to be bullies. In the *You* (17 May, 2007) a reader wrote the following letter in response to a girl who was bullied by a boy at school:

“Every school has its bullies, some worse than others. However, when you think about it the problem doesn’t lie with the bully or the school; it lies with the bully’s parents – a complete lack of discipline and order.”

Another reader wrote:

“My experience of school bullies – including the one who will remember me when he sees his broken nose in the mirror – tells me they suffer from low self-esteem problems. They usually resent good performance, effort or achievement in others and will pick on those people, especially if they seem smaller, gentler or weaker” (*You*, 17 May, 2007).

The South African society is plagued by a value crisis and value confusion. Because schools form part of the society, it can be expected that some of the problems experienced in society will also appear in schools. After all, children live in a particular society or community and most often go to schools that are in that community. The school is a societal institution in the midst of a particular community with a particular life- and worldview. Children who misbehave at home will most likely take their bad manners to school.

Current incidents depicting the manifestation of anti-social behavior and a lack of discipline in South African schools have dominated the media, government reports and

the South African education arena for some time (Puleni 2002:72). The following are a few of the headlines that were reported in newspapers about the crisis many of our schools have to face daily: “Primary schools of crime” (Cape Argus, 29 May 2007); “Drug abuse soars at high schools in Bay” (Herald, 23 February 2007); “Boy stabbed to death at rural school” (Daily Dispatch, 9 February 2007); “Boy (13) fights for life after school stabbing” (Pretoria News, 7 November 2006); “Random searches aim to curb school violence” (Sunday Times, 6 May 2007); and “Inside city’s school from hell” (Pretoria News, 28 May 2007). Many of these incidents are gang- and drug/alcohol related. These headlines indicate that many South African schools are becoming increasingly dangerous and unsafe for learners and teachers. Many learners go to school with dangerous and illegal weapons and substances like cigarettes, drugs, alcohol and marijuana. The Cape Argus (29 May 2007) reported that there are 40-odd *shebeens* operating in the areas immediately around schools where alcohol and illegal substances are sold. Learners often take substances to school to use and sell. The Herald (23 February 2007) reported that “some young people are being used by drug lords to circulate their products in schools”. The situation has become so bad that the National Department of Education (NDoE) has enforced random searches in schools to curb the problem of school violence (Sunday Times, 6 May 2007). These searches would be carried out by the police. This radical plan came in the wake of increasing violent crimes in South Africa’s public schools. The following statistics were reported by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education in the Sunday Times of 6 May 2007: 10 killings, 273 rapes, 2504 cases of being in the possession of drugs, 2164 assaults and 75 cases of pupils carrying guns to school. Most of these crimes were committed by school-going children. In a study conducted by De Wet (2003b:171) she also found that learner-on-learner violence was the most common violent crime that learners tend to commit. But in a KwaZulu-Natal school a principal and the chairman of the School Governing Body (SGB) were arrested in connection with the execution-style murder of two teachers (Sunday Times, 6 May 2007).

According to De Vries (1994) the moral crisis, which often manifests itself through disruptive behaviour, has the following implications for education:

- Disrespect by learners towards teachers; (e.g. when learners do not listen to teachers, refuse punishment and talk back to teachers, or smoke on the school premises).
- Learner absenteeism from school and classes.
- The abuse of alcohol and drugs on the school premises (often in front of teachers, especially before the school starts, during break or after school).
- A complete breakdown in the culture of teaching and learning, because no effective teaching and learning can take place in an environment that is unsafe for both learners and teachers.
- A low morale amongst learners, for instance, by not preparing for classes, not doing homework or by refusing to participate in class activities.
- School violence.
- A lack of positive role models.

However, it has to be mentioned that the crisis in schools is not solely caused by learners. Perceptions about the teachers, as stated by De Vries (1994) indicate the following:

- Some are poor role models;
- Teacher absenteeism from school and classes;
- Teachers going to school unprepared;
- Teachers not being dedicated to their calling;
- Teachers being afraid to exercise discipline in their classrooms; and
- A low morale amongst teachers.

In this regard De Wet (2003a:113) concurs that although learners and educators alike are often victims of crime, both groups are often guilty of committing crime. In order for our schools to be safe institutions where effective teaching and learning can take place, and where mutual respect exists between teachers and learners, we need to take note of the following statement which was uttered by Minister Kader Asmal, the then Minister of Education:

“Unless we nurture a value system in our schools that is workable, owned by everyone, and in line with the principles not only of the Bill of Rights but of all the curriculum and school governance policy and legislation, we run the dangerous risk of turning our classrooms into the battleground between an anarchic freedom that masquerades as ‘human rights’ and an authoritarian backlash that masquerades as moral regeneration” (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, 2001:53).

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored some of the factors that cause the moral degeneration of the present-day South African society and the educational implications of these factors. It was established that the moral decay of the South African society manifests itself in amongst others, substance abuse, materialism and consumerism, moral and sexual licentiousness and too much emphasis on individual and children’s rights.

The next chapter will focus on the role of societal structures and the important role they play in education.

CHAPTER 4

THE TASK AND ROLE OF SOCIETAL STRUCTURES IN PROMOTING VALUES IN SOCIETY AND IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Man has historically been vested with the power and competence to control and manage reality as a farmer, engineer, medical doctor, preacher, educator, etc. The educator controls reality in terms of his/her habits, behaviour and customs as an educator (Le Roux 2004:27). He/she therefore controls reality in a typical educational manner as an educator and as a subject specialist. In Chapters 1 and 2 it was stated that educationists and other scholars agree that the transmission of values to children is mainly the task of the parents (the family) and the teachers (schools). The school exists as a relatively autonomous, distinguishable societal institution alongside others such as the state, church, business and family, which all have a role to play in the education of children (Schoeman 1988:129). This implies that there exists a mutual relationship between the family, the school and other societal structures.

In this chapter four societal structures namely the school, family, state and the church and their role in education will be discussed. It is also important to discuss what the functions of these societal structures, especially the school and the family, are in transmitting norms and values to children.

4.2 AN EXPLORATION OF THE FIELD OF SOCIO-EDUCATION

One cannot conduct a study on the moral decay of society without exploring the field of Socio-education because Socio-education deals with, amongst others, the educative responsibility of society. Socio-education (Socio-pedagogics or Sociology of Education) as one of the disciplines of education, studies the educative function of the family and other social structures. According to Abosi & Kandjii-Murangi (2004:64-65) and Pretorius (1998:2-3) it is the study of social institutions and groups involved in the

educational process: the school, the family, various community structures and the entire social system. By studying this discipline one develops a critical consciousness, a questioning attitude to social facts, opinions and assumptions, which are often taken for granted. The study of Socio-education includes the education phenomena, in the family and at school. The field of Socio-education, according to Pretorius (in Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:3) is the guidance and support of the child by adults in order that he/she can interact effectively with others in society, on all social levels and in all societal relationships and situations.

The aim of Socio-education entails giving an account of the reasons for social decay by reflecting on the causes, diagnoses, remediation and prevention of problems among young children (Schoeman 1988:86). Pretorius (1998:1) supports this notion when he states that the aim and task of Socio-pedagogics is to investigate the relationship between education and society, with a view of finding solutions to the pedagogical problems that have arisen or may arise.

The *socio* in Socio-pedagogics stems from the Latin word *socius* which means participant, ally or companion (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:3; <http://www.reference.com/search?q=Sociology>, 2007:3). The prefix *socio* thus refers to interpersonal relationships or to people in social relationships with one another. In the educational context these relationships could embrace the various educative relationships in primary and secondary educative situations (home and school), but they could also include wider societal relationships associated with education in general (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:3).

Abosi & Kandjii-Murangi (2004:72) make mention of functionalism, which is a sociological theory that considers society as a system of interrelated parts that must function together in harmony. Society thus implies the grouping of accepted forms of social behaviour and beliefs that hold people together by common consent, for example, language, customs, traditions, political and community groupings. The concept society thus embodies the interactions of individuals in their relationships. However, society

does not only consist of people, but also of different other structures. The social reality is a complexity of layers which overlap with one another, influencing one another in constructive as well as in conflicting situations (Gurvitch in Pretorius 1998:77), as can be seen in the diagram below:

Table 4.1 Gurvitch's structure of society

<p style="text-align: center;">LAYER 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The economic-technical layer</p> <p>The observable material world: cities, towns, roads, railways, rivers (as links), lines of communication, means of livelihood (industries, agriculture, production) - therefore the world as a product of joint human labour.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">LAYER 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The layer of social organization</p> <p>Social organization and human contact: organizations of workers, employers, social work, relaxation, education, art, law, politics, attending church. It is sometimes not a visible world, but its presence, operation and influence are felt in everyday life.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">LAYER 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The layer of norms (rules of life)</p> <p>Living, clothing and eating traditions, social, cultural, moral and religious patterns and rules which determine our behaviour in society. Individual and collective rules.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">LAYER 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The layer of values (the 'deepest layer')</p> <p>The core of society is ruled by higher categories: truth, beauty, goodness, holiness, the desire for pure knowledge, aesthetic experiences and values, law, love between parent and child. You have to love your neighbour as yourself - therefore, the sum of our moral and religious convictions.</p>

Pretorius (1998:78) indicates that a child has to be educated and taught to participate in these four layers. The school has the task of educating the child to

- create an appreciation for labour as a human-related social phenomenon, and for the product of labour, in other words to teach the child to work (Layer 1);
- be able to organize, for example community upliftment projects (Layer 2);
- co-operate and co-exist (Layer 3); and
- create a respect for values and a willingness to live according to such values (Layer 4).

Closely linked to Socio-education is Sociology and social reconstructivism. Sociology is a broad discipline. It is a branch of the social sciences that focuses on developing knowledge about human social behaviour, social interaction, social structures and social activity. As the study of human beings in their social context it is concerned with aspects of society such as, amongst others, social change, culture, crime, family, deviant behaviour, substance abuse and divorce (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociology>, 2009:1). Whereas Socio-education makes a study of the educative task of the family and the school, Sociology studies the family from a broad perspective, which includes issues such as

- the structure and functions of the family;
- role differentiation and the distribution of power;
- religion;
- marital rights; and
- economic activities (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:26).

The theoretical framework which underpins this study is the philosophy of social reconstructivism, a philosophy which is strongly orientated towards social transformation. It explores issues in society such as the empowerment and emancipation of oppressed and denationalized communities. Social reconstructivists see the primary struggle in society as being between those who wish to preserve society as it is, or with little change, and those who believe that great changes are needed in order to make society more responsive to the needs of individuals (Steyn & Wilkinson 1998:204). This ideological perspective does not seek to impose society's

values on the individual, nor does the individual have to tread a lonely and solitary path towards self-discovery (Bottery 1990:13). The individual and society are seen as mutually beneficial in the process of social transformation. Social reconstruction is thus seen as a vehicle of social reform through education, bearing in mind that there are certain things in society that are worth preserving. This change or reform is necessary because society faces a severe crisis resulting from human kind's unwillingness to reconstruct institutions and values to meet the needs of modern life ([http://www.ellis.melton.com/TCNJ/Social Reconstructionism and Education.pdf](http://www.ellis.melton.com/TCNJ/Social_Reconstructionism_and_Education.pdf), 2009:308). The symptoms of this crisis are many and include war, poverty, terrorism, crime, substance abuse, racism, sexism and violence. Social reconstructivists argue that schools cannot ignore these problems and that the study of the problems and the solutions should form an integral part of the curriculum. Learners should thus be made aware of these pressing social ills and develop a critical consciousness towards them so that they can be equipped to deal with them adequately. Therefore, social reconstructivism seeks to

- a) locate schools in a social or societal context;
 - b) utilize schools as instruments or agencies of social change and reform; and
 - c) identify society's current social, political, economic and educational problems
- ([http://www.ellis.melton.com/TCNJ/Social Reconstructionism and Education.pdf](http://www.ellis.melton.com/TCNJ/Social_Reconstructionism_and_Education.pdf), 2009:316).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) forms the basis for social transformation in our post-apartheid society. The aim of social transformation is, amongst others to ensure that the imbalances of the past, including educational imbalances are redressed, and that equal opportunities are provided for all sectors of the population. If social transformation is to be achieved, all South Africans have to be educationally affirmed through the recognition of their potential, the removal of artificial barriers and the recognition of the equal worth of all.

4.3 THE NATURE AND AIM OF EDUCATION

Before the question ‘whose task is it to educate?’ can be answered, it is important to determine what education is. Education is as old as society, and serves societies as well as individuals. According to Abosi & Kanjii-Murangi (2004:1) the concept education is derived from the Latin verb *educare*, which means to educate. *Educare* conversely means ‘to lead out’, or ‘to draw up/out’ a child’s power for development. It thus refers to a child’s potential to learn and to the external direction and training which are provided by adults to assist the child’s inner developmental process. Education came into being as a result of human subjects’ attempts at generating a scientific account of general inter-human events or actions, which could be labeled as educational events or activities. As a result, this discipline has become a clearly discernable and demarcated field of scientific investigation, and as such, is aimed at delivering scientific pronouncements with regard to the educational interventions of the mature person (the educator) in dealing with the immature subject (the learner) (Le Roux 2004:40). According to Grobler (in Puleni 2002:32) education implies that parents and educators, on the basis of recognized, particular norms and values pertaining to their communities, teach their young children certain things, namely to talk, to obey the rules of the household, not to swear, not to steal etc. Education thus aims at assisting the young and immature child to become a civilized, able and competent human being who will not only be able to control his/her emotions, but will also have sensitivity and a desire for the good and the true. According to Abosi & Kandjii-Murangi (2004:vii) education has three main functions, namely it

- a) is developmental - it develops the unique qualities of every child;
- b) differentiates between learners - it treats every child as an individual, appreciating individual differences but also acknowledging the fact that there are commonalities among learners; and
- c) is integrative - it accommodates people of varying backgrounds - culture and beliefs, thereby making for a cooperative, integrated approach in problem-solving.

Education is a social institution on which we rely heavily to help children learn inquiry and thinking skills. It implies the disclosure of the personality structure of a person as a whole. The total development of the learner towards mature civilization and moral growth is therefore essential (Schoeman 1980:119). The ultimate aim of education is the manifestation of the entire normative structure of the maturing child by the educator, in which both parties have a role to play. This manifestation goes hand in hand with the fact that the learner must have thorough knowledge of the values of the community of which he/she is a member. However, only having knowledge of these values is not enough. The maturing child should be inspired and motivated by these values to act normatively and according to the moral codes of his/her community or society. The child should also be made aware of the consequences of not adhering to the values of his/her community. The manifestation of the normative aspect aims to make the child aware of what is morally right and what is morally wrong. Schoeman (1980:38) further stipulates that

“All forms of education, ranging from primitive to the most sophisticated, exhibit a cultural-historical foundation. However, matters are more complicated regarding its qualification because education in general is largely concerned with the normative aspects of human life; it therefore cannot accept a fixed qualification function. Its aim is extremely flexible and may vary considerably in accordance with the societal relationships in which education as a phenomenon is manifested.”

Abosi & Kandjii-Murangi (2004:3) claim that for education to take place a deliberate effort is needed to pass on to an individual something that will make him/her change for the better. Therefore, no one can claim that he/she has been educated yet shows no positive signs of change.

Christians believe that God is the Giver and Creator without whom there would be no cosmos or reality, only total chaos. For the Christian many things in life, including education have their origin and meaning in God. In order for education to be

meaningful, children must be educated towards acceptance and obedience of God. The Afrikaans concept for education, *opvoeding* literally means 'leading upwards', thus education towards God (Schoeman 1975:40). No other two institutions play a more profound role in educating a child 'upwards towards God' than the family and the school.

The following diagram outlines the normative nature of education as a phenomenon within the pedagogical reality (Schoeman 1980:108-118; Le Roux 2004:29).

Table 4.2 The normative nature of education

ASPECT OF REALITY	MANIFESTATION OF THE ASPECT BY THE TEACHER
Pistical/faith aspect	The teacher must respect the faith of the learner. The object of the learners' ultimate faith and firm belief is of utmost importance in education.
Ethical aspect	The teacher must constantly be well-informed and clear as to the 'quality' of love of the learner for the self and fellow human beings, as well as of all creation that surrounds him/her.
Juridical aspect	<p>The educator is expected to be able to give an accurate account of the legal grounds on which learners judge matters. The principles on which these judgments are founded must always be critically analyzed, evaluated and, where necessary, corrected so that, within the juridical sphere of reality, the learner may be encouraged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop a forgiving personality, with a keen sense of what is right and what is wrong; • to fully evaluate circumstances and accountability and then to react with commensurate reasoning; • to act equitably; and • not to adhere to the 'principle' of vengeance.
Aesthetical aspect	All teachers should be able to give a critical account of the degree of receptiveness that their learners show for whatever is beautiful in life. The development of the learners' aesthetic sense is important and should not be confined only to subjects/learning areas such as arts and culture, music and literature. This aspect should constitute a sensitivity for the harmonious and it should be encouraged in all

	subjects/learning areas.
Economic aspect	The learner's sense of frugality with regard to all sectors of life should be critically observed and guided. Adjustments with regard to the learner's sense of value should be established. Principles pertaining to thriftiness and economy regarding not only material possessions, but also in the areas of the allotment of time, energy and love should be fostered.
Social aspect	The social adaptation of the learners should be diligently observed by the teacher. The learner must develop within the social structure into a well-adjusted, responsible and accepted member of his/her community. Non-adjustment should be identified and rectified as soon as possible.
Lingual aspect	The language proficiency of learners should in all subjects/learning areas (not only in languages) be critically observed and evaluated. It is essential to develop the learner's perception in this regard with a view of developing into an emancipated personality for whom acceptable language usage has become the norm.
Historical aspect	The degree of civilization achieved by the learner should be taken into consideration. With the guidance of his/her educators, the learner has to develop into a civilized person. Manifestation in this sense takes place in accordance with the specific cultural situation of both educator and learner. Anti-normative behaviour should be identified and acceptable alternatives should be envisaged.
Logical aspect	The way in which the learner thinks and argues must be critically analyzed. The ideal to think and argue correctly should be cultivated. The manifestation of the learner as a logically thinking personality should be envisaged.

Schools have to contribute to the full personal development of each learner, and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy and human rights (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001:38). All these above aspects of the learners should be activated (developed) by the teachers.

4.4 STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS

According to Schoeman (1988:95-96) the total reality or cosmos consists of numerous smaller structures like the family, the church, state and the school, which can be identified and distinguished from other entities. All societal structures can be distinguished on the grounds of different individual structures which are indicated by referring to their foundational and their qualification function. The foundational function refers to how a structure was founded and developed historically through the ages. The qualification function of a structure refers to the 'highest' function, role and/or destination of the structure. These are rooted in one of the 15 aspects of reality (see Figure 4.1). The school, state and the church are historically founded, but they are characterized by different qualifications. As was previously mentioned, these structures are interrelated with one another. Such a relation of structures or intertwinement of structures is referred to by Kalsbeek (1975:190-191) as *enkapsis*. The term *enkapsis*, which is derived from the Greek verb *enkaptein* (to swallow) was first introduced by the Swiss biologist Heidemann to describe the relation between organs and the total reality within which the organs function. Although the societal structures are all interwoven and form an *enkaptic* unity (because they cannot function in isolation), they each have their own responsibility, authority and decision-making power with regard to, amongst others, education. This is referred to as the principle of 'sphere sovereignty'. It means that each of these structures has its own identity and sovereignty – each is unique. Kalsbeek (1975:353) and Schoeman (1988:123) assert that the counterpart of 'sphere sovereignty' is 'sphere universality'. It is the principle that indicates that all modalities and structures are intimately connected with one another in an unbreakable coherence. Just as 'sphere sovereignty' stresses the unique distinctiveness and irreducibility of the model aspects, 'sphere universality' emphasizes that every one depends on all others for its meaning. Although these societal structures are interrelated and interdependent, no structure has the right to 'interfere' with the others, unless there are good and legitimate reasons to do so (Schoeman 1985:79).

The following diagram (aspects of reality) illustrates how the different societal institutions are founded and qualified (Schoeman 1988:36; Kalsbeek 1975:100).

Figure 4.1 Aspects of reality

Aspect (foundational function)	Meaning nucleus (qualification function)
Pistical aspect (church)	Faith and certainty
Ethical aspect	Moral love
Juridical aspect	Adjudication
Aesthetic aspect	Harmony
Economic aspect	Balance
Social aspect	Social intercourse
Lingual aspect	Symbolic meaning
Historical aspect (school, state)	Controlled formative power
Logical aspect	Analytical thought
Psychical aspect	Sensory feeling
Biotic aspect (family)	Life
Physical aspect	Energy
Kinematic aspect	Motion
Spatial aspect	Continuous extension
Numerical aspect	Discreet quantity

4.5 THE FAMILY AND ITS ROLE IN THE EDUCATION OF ITS CHILDREN

4.5.1 The concept family

People form families and families form communities and societies. Like other societal institutions such as the state, the school and the church, families play an important role in any society and in the education of children. Nobody can live in isolation – at least not for a long period, because humans are social beings who strive for affection and who are constantly in interaction with one another. Puleni (2002:18) states that even though

we are unique with regard to our personalities, attributes, talents, abilities and limitations, no one can live alone, separated from the surrounding environment of matter, plants, animals and societal relationships. This implies that every person must play the dual role of being an individual and also a member of society. Aiken (2004:197) elaborates on this observation when he states that everyone is influenced in one way or another by events and people outside the family or primary social group. But how is family defined? Miller (in Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:54) claims that “everyone knows what a family is, but few can define the term in ways acceptable to others.” He also notes that family is an elusive concept which defies definition because it encompasses many variant forms and meanings. McKie (2005:14) states that defining what the term family means can raise a raft of issues. What also complicates the definition is the fact that in the twenty-first century there are both continuities and diversities in forms and experiences of families. In post-industrial societies, however, the so-called ‘nuclear family’, which consists of two parents and their child or children, continues to be prevalent in the many discussions on families. In addition to the nuclear family we also find in African families the so-called ‘extended family’. The traditional nuclear family used to consist of a heterosexual couple with a child or children, with stipulated specific gender roles between the spouses. In modern society a family may now consist of homosexual couples, single parents (mothers or fathers), with or without children. But irrespective of how a family is composed and how many members it consists of, the family as an educational and societal institution is the basic unit of any society. Therefore its stability, strength and health will directly influence the well-being and stability of the society. In this regard Broodryk (2005:111) contends that if the family becomes disordered and malfunctioning, it has the potential for chaos and destruction of society.

4.5.2 The individuality structure of the family

The family rests upon consanguinity and could be described as biotically founded (Figure 4.1) which, according to Kalsbeek (1975:198), means that the family does not presuppose a historic-cultural organization and is thus found in every period of history.

But not all families are related by blood. Some parents raise children that they have adopted, foster children or step-children. Le Roux (1994:11) defines family as “the smallest, most basic social unit in society.” The composition of a family may vary from a childless couple or single-parent family to a couple with their own and/or adopted children. Kalsbeek (1975) states that the nuclear family as we know it today has come about by way of differentiation. By means of this process, however, the different communities have not become isolated from one another. On the contrary, the mutual interlacements (*enkapsis*) of the communities have grown alongside the differentiation. The course of events which allows for the differentiation of these communities is typically historically founded. Therefore, although the family itself is founded in the biotic aspect of reality, the differentiation process of communities was founded upon the historical aspect. Kalsbeek (1975:206) asserts that the family, though it functions in all aspects of reality, is qualified by the moral aspect of reality. It is the relation of moral love and trust between children and parents which ought to dominate the entire life of the family. Love acts as the family’s constant guiding structural function, determining its destination. The qualification function of the family is different from that of other societal institutions. The state, for instance, is qualified by the juridical aspect.

4.5.3 The role and function of the family

We are all greatly influenced by the kinds of homes we grew up in and the family is considered a major aspect in our lives. Parental ambitions are powerful influences in determining appropriate and inappropriate behavior in their children. Our roles, responsibilities and relationships in our families give us a sense of belonging. McKie (2005:14) asserts that introducing individuals as wives, husbands, partners, mothers, fathers, daughters, brothers or sisters positions them in specific sets of relationships, roles, expectations and responsibilities. All families, regardless of their status in society or their composition, have the same functions. In contrast to animals, human beings undergo a period of growth and development that is exceptionally long. Soon after birth many animals are totally independent from their mothers, and rely on their own instincts

and survival skills. Children, on the other hand, are for a long time dependent on their parents for their physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

The mother's role as the primary caregiver in the family is particularly important, but this does not mean that children cannot thrive if they have a father as caregiver, or if they have more than one caregiver, or none at all. There is no doubt, however, that the relationship between children and their primary caretakers plays a vital role in their emotional, cognitive, moral and social development (Olds & Papalia 1986:152). The father also plays an important role in the child's life, with research indicating that attachments and bonds are formed between fathers and their children during the first year of the child's life. Fathers also exert a strong and significant influence on their children's social, emotional and cognitive development. Parents also play a major role in the development of the personalities of their children (Louw 1989:111).

Le Roux (1994:174-176) indicates the following functions of a family:

- Providing food, shelter and security for its members;
- Providing physical care;
- Generating affection among family members;
- Providing members with a sense of dignity and of purpose;
- Procreation, in order to ensure the perpetuation of the human species; and
- The socialization of its members.

According to Pretorius (1998:43) the family has a reproductive and biological function because it provides an institutional structure that can ensure the continuance and survival of society.

The family is or is supposed to be directly involved in the education of its children. Pretorius (1998:41) asserts that family education, if it takes place, forms the basis of all future societal relationships. The family therefore forms the foundation of the social aspect of education. The role of the family, as far as the transferring of norms is

concerned, is the same as that of the school. As was stated in Chapter 1, both the family as the primary educator, and the school as the secondary educator have a task in the education of the child (Wolhuter & Steyn 2003:530). Family members and teachers are, or should be powerful role models for the child. Through family education and interaction the child learns what is acceptable and what is not in terms of behaviour, attitudes, views, etc (Pretorius 1998:41). Parents and teachers often unknowingly impart values to children. They do this through their practices whereby they often unconsciously reflect their deep-rooted beliefs.

It is at home where positive attitudes such as respect for authority, respect for others, responsibility and self-value are planted and cemented; this transmission should, as far as possible, be done consistently. This deposit should then be reinforced and continued in school. The educative role of the family does not end when the child goes to school. Education should be of such a nature that the norms which are set in the family and afterwards by the school are meaningful to the child, so that he/she will strive to live in accordance with them (Prinsloo & Du Plessis 2006:60). Wolhuter & Steyn (2003:530) indicate that parents are entitled to expect from the teachers to guide and equip their children in the same religious spirit as that in which they are being raised at home. It can be expected then that in homes where there is a Christian spirit, parents would want this spirit to continue in school. The two institutions (the home and the school) should have a common aim for children. The kind of child that is envisaged by all, is one who is imbued with moral values, and acts in the interest of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and on social justice (Muller 2004:167; RNCS 2002:8). The important role which the family plays as the primary social institution and the primary educator of the child should not be understated. Solutions to the moral decay of society such as youth violence, a lack of respect in children, and immoral behaviour begin with the building and promotion of strong, caring and fully functional families. Wolhuter & Steyn (2003:534) state that parents and other members of society must understand that social life, in its current condition, has been highly contaminated, and its functioning impaired by sin. People should therefore contribute to the redemption and the transformation of a society that has become secularized, *i.e.*, a society that

ignores the will of God and/or other moral codes. This can be achieved by redefining values like self-respect, respect and concern for others, truthfulness and honesty within a religious perspective. Wolhuter & Steyn (2003:534) further indicate that parents must do their best to encourage their children to develop the attitudes and values on which both the school and society are based.

The family is not only connected to the school, but is also, according to Kalsbeek (1975:206) and Schoeman (1985:78-79) intimately linked with the church to which its members belong, and the state of which the family members are citizens and within whose territory the family finds its domicile.

4.5.4 Parental involvement in school-typical education

Parents are not only responsible for instilling and enforcing values in their children – they should also be directly involved in school activities. The South African Schools Act (1996:8) stipulates that there must be a partnership between all stakeholders who have an interest in education. These partners are the state, parents, learners, the private sector and other members and institutions in the community.

Martins (in Heystek & Louw 1999:21) claims that principals of South African schools want parents to participate more actively in school activities with the aim of improving the standard of education. Effective partnership is, according to the South African Schools Act (1996:8) characterized by

- mutual trust and respect among the partners;
- shared decision-making;
- shared goals and values;
- a common vision;
- open communication;
- good team-work; and

- the promotion of the interests of the partnership rather than those of the individuals.

Parents are thus compelled by legislation to participate in school matters. The motivation of the parents to participate in school activities will, according to Heystek & Louw (1999:21) depend on the teachers and principals, because they are the people who can identify where parents' inputs and assistance are needed. In South Africa parents who serve on the SGB represent the parental community. The South African Schools Act (1996:25) stipulates that parents have to form the majority of members on the SGB. However, according to Rambiyana & Kok (2002:11) mere representation is not enough, because not all the parents can serve on the SGB. But whether they serve on the SGB or not, parents need to know there are other ways in which they can be involved in their children's education.

According to Wolhuter & Steyn (2003:534) parents should set good examples for their children, give them guidance and participate in their children's school matters. Le Roux (1994:73) offers the following guidelines for the realization of effective parental involvement in the school:

- Home visits are undertaken by a representative of the school.
- Parents are invited to the school and guided towards more effective parenthood so that they can share the responsibility for the child's education with the teacher.
- They are involved in upliftment activities.
- They are encouraged to improve their community involvement and not to shift the total responsibility for the children's guidance onto the shoulders of the community authorities and the school.
- They are informed about and given guidance regarding the learning difficulties their children face.
- They can become involved in activities such as establishing education committees and the supervision of school libraries.

4.6 THE TASK AND ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN EDUCATION

4.6.1 The individuality structure of the school

The school is a structure that was founded by man because of cultural and historical needs (Schoeman 1985:169; Schoeman 1980:39). Unlike the family, which was founded in the biotic aspect of reality, the school was founded traditionally. The school, as is the case with education, emerged as part of man's cultural evolution and is consequently related to the historical situation in which it exists and the culture for which it was supposed to cater (Tlali 2000:17). The school has a dual task; it must teach learners subject-specific knowledge, but it must also educate learners by inculcating norms and values in them. A true and dedicated teacher will realize the importance of both his/her teaching and educational role and try to balance the two.

4.6.2 The school as an institution for teaching and for the transmission of values

Prinsloo & Du Plessis (2006:39) profess that the school is an institution of the community that provides the bridge between the parental home and the larger society. Pretorius (1998:75) states that the school is a societal institution which was established by the society, with the task of methodically providing the maturing child with the skills, knowledge, values and insight that he/she needs to function effectively in society. It is a teaching-learning organization which was primarily conceived as an institution to provide instruction and formal learning (Mariaye 2006:111). Children go to school primarily to gain and expand their knowledge and to be equipped with skills. Teaching is, according to Le Roux (2004:25) aimed at the disclosure of knowledge and the development of skills, which means that teaching makes an appeal on the logic, knowledge, comprehension and intellect of the learner. Rambiyana & Kok (2002:11) claim that people are born with cognitive potentialities that have to be developed through environmental stimulation, which can either be planned or incidental. They also state that schools are commonly held responsible for teaching learners to think effectively.

The school is an environment where children develop their cognitive abilities in a planned manner. Schools thus need to create and provide an environment and opportunities which are conducive to effective teaching and learning. According to Babarinde (1994:229) teaching is a sub-set of the concept education. He concurs that to teach “is to bring someone to learn something by indicating in some way what has to be learnt in a manner that is adapted to his level of understanding.”

Jacobs & Gawe (1996:3) indicate that the teaching-learning relationship does not imply a dichotomy between acts of teaching and acts of learning. Every teaching-learning relationship is both teaching and learning for all participants, although teachers usually teach more than they learn and learners learn more than what the teachers teach. The roles of the teacher are outlined in the NEPA (1996:A47-A48) as follows:

- *Learning mediator:* the educator will mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, including those with barriers to learning, construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualized and inspirational, communicate effectively, showing recognition of and respect for the differences of others. In addition, an educator will demonstrate sound knowledge of subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching.
- *Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials:* the educator will understand and interpret provided learning programmes, design original learning programmes, identify the requirements for a specific context of learning and select and prepare suitable contextual and visual resources for learning. The educator will also select, order and pace learning in a manner sensitive to the different needs of the subject/learning area and learners.
- *Leader, administrator and manager:* the educator will make decisions appropriate to the level of the learners, manage learning in the classroom, carry out classroom administrative duties efficiently and participate in school decision-making structures. These competencies will be performed in ways which are

democratic, which support learners and colleagues, and which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs.

- *Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner:* the educator will achieve ongoing personal, academic, occupational and professional growth through pursuing reflective study and research in their specific learning area, in broader professional and educational matters, and in other (related) fields.
- *Community, citizenship and pastoral role:* the educator will practice and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. The educator will uphold the Constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learners and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators. Furthermore, the educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organizations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS education.
- *Assessor:* the educator will understand that assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate it into this process. The educator will have an understanding of the purpose, methods and effects of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners. The educator will design and manage both formative and summative assessment in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of learning and meet the requirements of accrediting bodies. The educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment. The educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmes.
- *Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist:* the educator will be well-grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods, and procedures relevant to the discipline, subject, learning area, phase of study or professional or occupational practice. The educator will know about different approaches to teaching and learning (and, where appropriate, research and management), and how these may be used in ways which are appropriate to the learners and the

context. The educator will have a well-developed understanding of the knowledge appropriate to the specialized field.

As has been stated, the school exists alongside societal institutions such as the state, church, business and family which all have a role to play in the education of children (Schoeman 1980:141). According to Louw (1997:22-23) the mutual relationships of these institutions with the school implies that the school plays a particular role in a particular community that holds a particular life- and worldview.

Children spend between five to eight hours a day at school. Because of the amount of time they spend with learners, teachers are agents of change and can have a great influence on the learners, the school and the society. Next to the child's parents teachers have the greatest influence for good behaviour and conduct upon children. During their school-going years (especially when they enter high school) children are at the age when they develop a questioning and curious attitude towards issues such as authority, established values, attitudes, religion, government, the meaning and purpose of life and their final destination. Because of this it is vital for teachers to take their calling seriously in helping and guiding learners in their quest for answers.

According to Wolhuter & Steyn (2003:535) parents and teachers should educate and acculturate learners to function in a society that adheres to Christian values (if the society is a Christian society). Children should be taught the values that pertain to their particular community or society; if it is a Christian society the children should be taught Christian values. They should, however, also be made aware of and respect other cultures and religions.

Mariaye (2006:112-127) describes the following three roles of the school:

- *The socialization role of the school:* socialization is defined as the comprehensive and consistent induction of the individual into the objective world of society or a sector of it. Sears *et al* (1991:207) claim that human beings are social animals

who spend most of their time, about 75% of their waking time, in the presence of other people. The process of socialization enables the child to make meaning of the world around him/her. The school is a socialization agent where the child interacts and socializes with others, mainly other learners and teachers. Socialization is thus participatory in nature; children learn by participating in various activities that are organized by the school, in and outside the classroom.

- *The transmission role of the school:* the transmission (of values) role of the school is more overt. Rules and patterns that underlie the practice of morality are often intentionally taught by the teacher and are integrated in the formal curriculum. The transmission of values aims at enhancing the child's moral behaviour. The South African Constitution of 1996 recognizes ten fundamental values, namely democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, *ubuntu*, an open society, accountability, the rule of law, respect and reconciliation. The school has the responsibility to incorporate these values in the education process. In a speech made by Nelson Mandela during the *Saamtrek* Conference in February 2001, he had the following to say about these ten values:

"We cannot assume that because we conducted our struggle on the foundations of those values, continued adherence to them is automatic in the changed circumstances. Adults have to be reminded of their importance and children must acquire them in their homes, schools and churches. Simply, it is about our younger generation making values part of themselves, in their innermost being. It seems as if South Africans have lost touch with values – we need to make them part of our lives again" (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001:38).

- *The developmental task of the school:* the school must provide opportunities for learners to develop intellectually through formal instruction of various subjects or learning areas. Mariaye (2006:126) claims that the role of the school according to Piaget is to provide the appropriate opportunities for cognitive development at

each stage so that children can proceed to higher stages. In addition, the school must also provide opportunities for children to develop morally. The task of the school is also that of transmitting values to learners in order to enhance their moral development. Teachers have the opportunity to instill and strengthen a positive value system and a positive attitude in children. In doing this, teachers will contribute a major part in securing adequate moral development in children, in securing a better future for the child, and ultimately in securing a better society.

4.6.3 The school in a multicultural South African society

South Africa is a pluralistic and multicultural country. The multicultural nature of the South African society does not make the education task of teachers easy, as is mentioned in Chapter 1. According to Le Roux (1997:4) multicultural education was introduced and implemented in South Africa in 1992. Squelch (as cited by Tlali 2000:79) defines multicultural education as “education that provides the necessary knowledge and skills which enable learners to move towards greater equality and freedom.” Multicultural education also enables the learner to develop the ability to recognize, challenge and combat inequality, injustice, racism, stereotyping, prejudice and bias. Through multicultural education the teacher should enable the learner to gain an understanding and appreciation of the learners’ own and others’ culture. Education (whether it is monocultural or multicultural) thus also has the purpose of the transmission of culture in order to preserve and protect cultures. The need for multicultural education in South Africa arose out of a history of segregation, educational domination, inequality and oppression (Le Roux 1997:2; Tlali 2000:29). Therefore, in South Africa multicultural education cannot be separated from politics and the country’s past. Multicultural education has a major role to play in assisting South Africans to achieve reconciliation, equity and equality and to create a unique South African identity.

Many teachers are challenged in educating learners who have different backgrounds, religions, life- and worldviews and traditions. Often teachers who have been trained and who grew up in monocultural environments are not able to handle the cultural

differences they experience in classrooms. Pretorius (1998:118) mentions that as tertiary institutions are becoming increasingly multicultural, education faculties need to make provision (if they have not done so yet) for this reality through curriculum reform in respect of teacher training programmes and programmes for in-service practicing teachers. Programmes for teacher training should, according to Pretorius (1998:118) promote the following characteristics in order to assist future or current teachers with multicultural education in their schools:

- *Positive self-identity*: knowledge, understanding of and love for the own culture is a prerequisite for the acceptance of and positive attitude towards other cultures.
- *Awareness*: an awareness of the existence of other cultural groups and individuals must be created.
- *Sensitivity*: a social sensitivity in respect of intercultural diversity in society must always be the point of departure.
- *Understanding*: students must be encouraged to acknowledge, accept and understand other cultures as equal to their own in order to foster mutual appreciation and acceptance.
- *Intercultural communication*: as a logical outcome of the above-mentioned phases, students should be encouraged to become involved in and learn about cultures so that differences may be resolved and common aspects positively developed.

Teachers have to practice positive values and transfer them to children, and also assist in cultural preservation. This raises the question - whose values, and whose culture? Should it be the values of the dominant culture, because they are more important than the values of the minority cultural groups, or should there be a balance among the values of all the different racial, religious and cultural groups in a given school? According to Le Roux (1997:2) the reality of multicultural school populations in South Africa necessitates a thorough reflection on multicultural education as unique theory and practice education. Every teacher should realize that this approach to education entails much more than simply offering education to a multicultural class or school

composition – or both. It requires a paradigm shift, a change of heart, an unprejudiced reorientation and an innovative attitude. Pretorius (1998:117) asserts that people often assume that multicultural education automatically results from any educational situation where pupils of different cultural groups are put together in one classroom or school. Such a mixture can at best only be described as a multicultural situation and does not guarantee that multicultural education will take place. Multicultural education implies a multiplicity of cultures in the learning and teaching content, and not merely a grouping together of learners from different cultures. Pretorius (1998:119) also states that educational content in a multicultural school should reflect the multicultural nature of the present-day South African society, and not promote the values and thoughts of one particular culture only. The teacher has to promote and enhance cultural interaction among learners. However, this will be difficult if the teacher her/himself does not embrace cultural integration. Le Roux (1997:58) claims that the extent to which multicultural education succeeds in the classroom relies heavily on the knowledge, attitude, views and behaviour of the teacher. This is so because the teachers are mainly responsible for what and how children learn.

The first objective of multicultural education is, according to Le Roux (1997:33) and De Kock (2001:39) to extend the learner's knowledge of his/her own culture, but also the customs, habits and characteristics of other cultures in a multicultural and open community. It should aim to prepare learners for the realities of a pluralistic society. Therefore multicultural education is an approach to education that aims to take cultural pluralism in the entire education system into account. Although there are dominant cultures in South Africa, all South Africans must be provided with the space and opportunity to express their multiple diverse identities in order to promote nation-building. No cultural group, in education or in other spheres, must be marginalized or alienated because all South Africans, without exception, share the same inalienable rights, equal citizenship, and common national destiny, and all forms of bias (especially racial, ethnic and gender) are dehumanizing (White Paper on Education and Training 1995:22). Nation-building in the apartheid era in South Africa was primarily aimed at establishing a White dominant nation and a Black (African) subservient nation (Le Roux

& Louw 2003:59). Education was channeled along racial lines, where Whites received education that was superior and of a better quality than the education provided to non-Whites. In post-apartheid South Africa the education system and its curriculum expresses our idea of ourselves as a unified society and our vision as to how we see the new form of society being realized through our children and learners (RNCS 2002:1).

Within a pluralistic society such as South Africa, cultural transfer as a distinguishable task of the school must reflect the multicultural nature of society. Pretorius (1998:111-112) gives the following objectives of multicultural education: to

- ensure the acknowledgement, acceptance and appreciation of the society's multicultural nature;
- promote intercultural respect and interaction;
- promote knowledge of the own culture, as well as the positive contribution of other cultures to society;
- eliminate ethno-centrism (cultural superiority), stereotyping and prejudices;
- eliminate intercultural conflict which can stem from racism, sexism and socio-economic considerations;
- acquire knowledge of a society's social and historical realities;
- develop critical thinking to solve social problems through negotiation and constructive dialogue;
- promote social skills within a multicultural society;
- develop positive attitudes and tolerance towards other cultural groups;
- ensure equal educational opportunities for every individual at school and tertiary institutions;
- ensure individual deepening of an own cultural identity;
- ensure a positive contribution towards the development of a just and democratic dispensation;
- creatively and sensitively promote a society's cultural diversity;

- promote an understanding that different cultural groups attach different interpretations to values, events and concepts;
- develop and promote intercultural communication skills;
- develop problem-solving attitudes in respect of social problems;
- teach pupils relevant life skills from a multicultural perspective;
- combat discrimination and cultural alienation;
- promote analysis and evaluation to address social problems such as sexism, discrimination and racism rationally; and
- support the broader objectives of education so that the optimal realization of the learners' potential can be ensured.

4.6.3.1 *The meaning of the concept culture in a multicultural learning environment in South Africa*

The concept culture stems from the Latin word *cultura* which means to cultivate (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture>, 2007:1). Le Roux (1997:8) states that owing to the multi-dimensional nature of this concept, there is a noticeable lack of consensus amongst researchers on a uniform definition of culture. Camilleri (in Le Roux 1997:8) states that between 1871 and 1950 more than 160 definitions of the concept were used worldwide. However, the concept multicultural education cannot be clearly put in context or clearly understood without reference to the concept culture, as there is an unmistakable link between the two. Education is influenced and shaped by culture. Every human being possesses a form of culture, irrespective of their social status, educational background or where they reside. Pretorius (1998:78) concedes that in the broader sense, culture stands opposite nature, and entails everything man's hand and spirit took from natural, God-given materials because it represents some or other value to him/her. By doing this man transforms nature into culture. Culture is, according to Lemmer & Badernhorst (1997:193) not genetically transmitted, but acquired through the process of enculturation. Feinberg (in Mariaye 2006:94) states that culture refers to a network of shared meanings to which certain people have access and from which they draw to communicate with and recognize one another. Fowler (1991:134) states that by

culture we mean the pattern of living that is characteristic of a human community, a pattern of living that has continuity from generation to generation. We thus speak of a Western culture, an Asian culture, or an Afro-centric culture. All these cultures carry with them a communal life- and worldview that is characteristic of that culture, which supports the way the world is perceived and experienced by those who live within these cultures. These cultures may or may not share common values. One cannot live in a culture without being influenced by the life- and worldview of that particular culture. According to Lemmer & Badenhorst (1997:192) the concept culture has different levels of meaning:

- It is a comprehensive concept that includes ways of thinking and acting as well as material objects, and hence indicates a holistic approach to the study of the way of life of human beings. In this sense culture is used to refer to a universal phenomenon applicable to the whole of humanity.
- It is defined as the way of life of a particular group of people, for example Afrikaner culture and Venda culture.
- Culture is used in the sense of a comprehensive cultural type, meaning that cultures of various but similar societies who share certain characteristics are grouped together, such as Nguni culture (including the Xhosa, Zulu and Swazi culture) or, in a still wider context, African culture and Western culture.
- Culture is used to refer to sets of features of identifiable groups of people within the larger society. These 'cultures within cultures' are called sub-cultures or micro-cultures, and are most often found in large societies. Examples of these are rural and urban cultures, the culture of the youth, of gangs, and even of poverty.
- Culture is also used to refer to phenomena which extend across groups and national boundaries and are thus regarded as international cultural systems, e.g. capitalism.
- Culture may also be defined as ideas underlying behaviour.

4.7 THE STATE AND ITS ROLE IN EDUCATION

The state is historically founded and juridically qualified (Kalsbeek 1975:216). Kalsbeek (1975:216) concedes that the state has its typical foundation in the historic-cultural modality and has come about by the historical formation, organization and allocation of power in society. The task of the state is primarily to juridically protect its citizens and to make laws (Le Roux 2004:23). The state must respect, protect, promote and fulfill its citizens' human rights, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (Section 7(2)).

The state is not primarily responsible for education, but only plays an indirect role towards the provision of education. In this regard Van der Walt (1994:275, 276) claims that the state must see to it that everybody has access to education, and the state must, as far as possible, contribute financially to education. But the state should not try to exert control and power over the internal affairs of the school. The role of the state in education is, however, not less important than that of the family – it is only different. According to Schoeman (1988:130) the role of the state with regard to education (the school) is to supply and maintain the buildings, resources and equipment. The state is also responsible for making and developing policies for education and for other sectors, and for employing teachers. Examples of education policies are the Norms and Standards for Educators which was promulgated by the Government in 2000 and specifies the seven roles of the teacher, the South African Schools Act of 1996, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), and the Employment of Educators Act of 1998. The state therefore plays a prescriptive role in education because it prescribes how education should take place, but does not directly educate learners. The greatest problem and challenge with policy making, according to Swanepoel & De Beer (1997:58) is that policies must reflect the needs and sentiments of the people for whom they are intended. The state must therefore know what these needs are by involving the society in policy formulation. The state is the structure of authority that possesses the power to adjudicate with regard to the education of its citizens (Le Roux 2004:23). The state, according to Schoeman (1985:79) requires cultured, well-brought up, educated and independent citizens who will benefit the state and society, instead of being a burden to them.

4.8 THE CHURCH AND ITS ROLE IN EDUCATION

The church is historically founded because human beings established this societal relationship as a result of their cultural needs (Le Roux 2004:23; Kalsbeek 1975:244). Dooyeweerd (in Kalsbeek 1975:240) concedes that “the Christ-confessing church is very different from other kinds of ‘religious’ communities because Christ himself instituted it.” The ultimate aim of the church is the realization of faith for its members (children and adults) by enhancing their moral, religious and spiritual lives. The church has the function of educating the child with respect to matters of faith and religious values (Pretorius 1998:43). This means that the church has a pistical (pertaining to faith) qualification/destination (see Figure 4.1).

Durkheim (in Palmer 2001:167) claims that the church has played an important role in education through the ages. But the church, like the state, has no direct role and power over the school. It is only indirectly involved in the education process, and this involvement is through its members. It strives to ‘produce’ members who will live their lives according to the way God (Buddha, Allah etc) wants them to. Moral education, whether directly or indirectly, is thus the responsibility of the family, the school, the state and the church, because all of these stakeholders wish for well-balanced, responsible and morally mature citizens. Coetzee (2001:25) indicates that a rigorous interaction and harmonic supplementation between family, church, school and state should be perceived as the ideal situation, because all of these institutions have a common goal, namely the effective education of their children.

4.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter four social institutions namely the school, family, state and the church and the important role they play in education were discussed. It was established that although each societal structure is autonomous and unique, they cannot function in isolation, but must function and work together as a unit.

The next chapter will discuss the research methods that will be adopted to investigate the reasons for the moral decay of the South African society.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review indicates that the South African society is in need of social transformation. Moral degeneration has caused the society to be unstable, violent and lawless (see Chapters 1 and 3). In order to restore the moral fiber of our society, it is in need of a moral renaissance.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate, by means of an empirical study, the reasons for the moral decay of the South African society, and why transformation is imperative. This chapter provides a brief theoretical overview of the research methods and the research design to be used, indicating the rationale for selecting the interpretive and constructivist paradigm.

Scientific research is conducted within a specific research paradigm and theoretical framework. In other words, refining a research problem involves identifying a theoretical framework (or a theory) and a research design upon which to base the research (Kaniki 2006:20). Terre Blanche & Durrheim (2006:6) describe research paradigms as all-encompassing belief systems of interrelated practice and thinking that guide the investigator in ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically fundamental ways to his/her choice of methods.

The theoretical framework from which this research was adopted is social reconstructivism:

“[Social] reconstructivism is an ideology which holds that society should continually reform in order to establish a more perfect government, social network or society. Commonly this is seen as recombining or recontextualizing the ideas arrived at by deconstruction – in other words, an existing system or medium is broken down into its smallest meaningful elements, and these elements are used to build a new system or medium free from the structures of the original” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconstructivism>: 2008:1).

The theory of social reconstructivism supports the notion that more emphasis should be placed on society-centered education in schools, taking into consideration the needs and components of society, and the ideas that are collectively shared by societies.

5.1.1 Problem formulation and research questions

The study aims to investigate the role of values education in addressing the problem of the moral decay of the South African society. The argument presented in this research is that the moral decay of the South African society can partly be ascribed to a lack of values, specifically among young people. It appears as if the teaching of values in the family and the school does not take place adequately, or that children choose to ignore these values.

The primary research question that guides this study is the following:

What role can values education (as should be provided by the two stakeholders that are directly involved with education, namely the family and the school) play in addressing the issue of the moral decay of the South African society?

The researcher will explore this research question by means of an appropriate research design. The secondary research questions which guided the literature study and the empirical research are:

- What are values and what role does a value system play in the moral development of children towards responsible adulthood?
- Does a lack of values contribute to the moral degeneration of a society?
- Will the teaching of values in the family and in schools have an influence on the moral development of children and eventually on the moral fiber of society?
- How can teachers and parents be equipped with the skills to teach learners about values?

5.2 RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods arise from the selected research paradigm/s. According to Cohen & Manion (1996:40) research is best described as “the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data, by making use of either qualitative or quantitative research methods.” Hancock (1998:3) and Niemann, Niemann, Brazelle, Van Staden, Heyns & De Wet (2000) cite the following comparison between qualitative and quantitative research methods:

Table 5.1 A comparison between quantitative and qualitative research methods

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH
Subjective	Objective
Holistic	Reductionist
Phenomenological	Scientific
Anti-positivistic	Positivistic
Descriptive	Experimental
Naturalistic	Contrived
Inductive	Deductive

McMillan & Schumacher (2001:14-15) introduce two levels of discourse for the concepts qualitative and quantitative. At one level quantitative and qualitative refer to distinctions

between the nature of knowledge - how one understands the world and the ultimate purpose of research. On another level of discourse the terms refer to research methods – how data are collected and analyzed – and the generalizations and presentations derived from the data. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:15) also indicate that the most obvious distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is in the form of data presentation. Quantitative research presents statistical data represented by numbers, while qualitative research presents data as a narration by means of words. The distinction, however, includes much more than merely the form of data presentation. The two research methods are also based on different assumptions of the world, the research purpose, the researcher's role, prototypical studies and the importance of context in the study.

5.2.1 Qualitative research and the rationale for adopting the qualitative research method

Hitchcock & Hughes (1995:12) define qualitative research as “an approach that enables researchers to learn first hand about the social world which they are investigating by means of participation in that world through focusing on the respondent.” Qualitative research techniques imply that data are primarily collected by means of words rather than numbers, and they provide a detailed narrative description, analysis and interpretation of phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:41). Qualitative research methods thus usually aim for depth and quality rather than quantity of understanding. Niemann *et al* (2000:283, 285) state that qualitative investigations have the following advantages:

- they describes the world as experienced by the individual;
- this world is described in ‘natural language’ and not in terms of numbers;
- open, flexible and non-rigid methods of collecting data are employed; and
- the researcher and the respondent often have a close relationship.

Miles & Huberman (in Punch 2009:117) present the following summary of the recurrent elements of qualitative research:

- Qualitative research is conducted in an intense and/or prolonged period within a field or life situation. These situations are typically 'banal' or normal ones, reflective of the everyday lives of individuals, groups, societies and organizations.
- The researcher's role is to gain a holistic overview of the context under study: its logic, its arrangements, and its explicit and implicit rules.
- The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the inside', through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathic understanding, and of suspending or 'bracketing' preconceptions about the topics under discussion.
- Reading through the material, the researcher may isolate certain themes and expressions that may be reviewed with the informants, but that should be maintained in their original form throughout the study.
- Many interpretations of this material are possible, but some are more compelling, for theoretical reasons, or on grounds of internal consistency.
- A main task is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations.
- Relatively little standardized instrumentation is used at the outset. The researcher is essentially the main instrument in the study.
- Most analysis is done by means of words. The words can be assembled, sub-clustered or broken into semiotic segments. They can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare and analyze them, and to bestow patterns upon them.

The rationale for adopting a qualitative research method lies in the perception that qualitative research methods adopt an interpretive, naturalistic and constructivist approach (Denzin & Lincoln in <http://www.computing.dcu.ie/~hruskin/RM2.htm>, 2008:1). McMillan & Schumacher (2001:15) state that the interpretive framework implies that there are multiple realities, and that people actively construct these realities by imposing

meaning upon their experience of social interaction, and then act according to their perceptions. Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim (2006:6, 274) assert that the interpretive paradigm involves three dimensions namely:

- a) taking people's subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them (ontology);
- b) making sense of people's experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to what they tell us (epistemology); and
- c) making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyze information (methodology).

According to Denzin & Lincoln (in <http://www.computing.dcu.ie/~hruskin/RM2.htm>, 2008:1) qualitative research is embedded in the philosophy of social constructivism, or naturalism. This philosophy implies that qualitative researchers' knowledge about social life involves both understanding the meaning that interaction has for the participants, and realizing that any analysis of society is made from a perspective that informs that analysis. Social constructionists make use of qualitative research methods to try and make sense of the meaning that people attach to the social worlds they inhabit – their relationships, their interaction, organizations, families and communities. Qualitative researchers thus attempt to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln in <http://www.computing.dcu.ie/~hruskin/RM2.htm>, 2008:2). They propose that knowledge of the social world is neither objective nor subjective, but inter-subjective, and is based on the shared meanings and understandings of the people being studied, and also of the people undertaking the research.

In this research the interpretive and constructivist stances will produce personalized accounts of the participants' opinions about the role values may play in addressing the problem of the moral decay of society.

McMillan & Schumacher (2001:40) indicate that qualitative research techniques are used with experimental, descriptive and correlation designs as a method to summarize observations and to indicate numerically the amount of error in collecting and reporting the data. In qualitative research, analysis is accomplished by using 'words', and the researcher does not necessarily start with a hypothesis, but usually with formulated questions emanating from the research topic. Qualitative research methods are concerned with finding answers to questions which begin with: why? how? and in what way? This research project seeks to find answers to the questions: Why is the South African society in decay? How does this moral decay impact on education, and on the wider South African society? In what way can this decay in society be prevented?

5.2.2 Data collection methods

5.2.2.1 The questionnaire as a data gathering tool

Two data collection instruments will be employed in this study namely the questionnaire and the interview. The interview will be used as the main data collection tool. A questionnaire is a means of eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions or attitudes of a sample of individuals by responding to written questions (Hancock 1998:1).

The questionnaire will be used in this research as a preliminary determination of the value system of the respondents, namely the learners. This will be followed by in-depth interviews with a number of the learners who completed the questionnaires. The guidelines for the interviews will be based on the findings of the questionnaires. The questions in the questionnaire were developed from the literature study. An analysis of the questionnaires will be done qualitatively.

Two hundred learners (fifty from four schools) will be randomly selected to complete the questionnaires. Four schools in the Eastern Cape were purposefully selected to include different socio-economic and different population areas/groups. The questionnaires consist of a combination of 'closed' or 'restricted' questions, and 'open' or 'unrestricted' questions. The main criterion for the selection of learners for the completion of the

questionnaires is that they should be in Grade 11. The sample will be drawn purposefully to include the intended Grade 11 learners. These learners are in a development phase where they have already started internalizing their own value systems and can provide information-rich and useful data. The researcher will follow up the trends emanating from the questionnaires by conducting individual interviews with twenty four learners, six learners from each of the selected schools.

5.2.2.2 *Focus group and individual interviews*

Qualitative research methods usually involve direct interaction with individuals on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting to obtain reliable and valid answers in the form of verbal responses from respondents. Qualitative techniques provide verbal descriptions to portray the richness and complexity of events that occur in natural settings from the participants' perspective (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:41; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:269). The qualitative data gathering tool that will be used for this research is the interview. According to The Open University Press (2001:58-59) an interview is not merely a device for gathering information. It is a process of constructing reality to which both parties (the researcher and the participant) contribute and by which both are affected in respect of their thoughts, ideas, viewpoints and theories. Interviews can be semi-structured or unstructured. Semi-structured interviews (individual and focus group interviews) will be conducted with various stakeholders in education such as teachers, principals, parents, and community leaders to obtain their views on the role of values in education. A semi-structured individual interview will be used to gather information from community leaders and principals, while semi-structured focus group interviews will be used to gather data from parents and teachers. One-on-one interviews will be conducted with community leaders and principals because more exploratory responses are needed from them. Also, because of their important role as stakeholders in education, the researcher considers it important to interview them individually in order to allow them sufficient time to express their opinions. Hancock (1998:6) asserts that semi-structured interviews involve a series of open-ended questions based on the topic the researcher wants to investigate. The open-ended nature of the questions defines the

topic under investigation, but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to participate in the discussion and to explain certain topics or questions in more detail. If the interviewee has difficulty answering a question, or provides only a brief response, the interviewer can use cues to encourage the interviewee to present more detailed information. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher to identify common themes. Focus groups can be useful to obtain specific information or when circumstances make it difficult to collect information by means of other methods. Hancock (1998:11) states that focus group interviews can be used when

- limited resources prevent more than a small number of interviews to be undertaken;
- it is possible to identify a number of individuals who share a common interest, and it is desirable to collect the views of several people within the population sub-groups; and
- group interaction among participants has the potential to develop a greater insight about the research topic.

Accordingly, focus groups produce qualitative data that provide insight into the attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the participants. Hancock (1998:11) mentions that one of the purposes of focus group interviews is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, opinions and reactions in a way which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observations, one-on-one interviews or questionnaire surveys. Race, Hotch & Parker (in Mariaye 2006:161-62) assert that a focus group interview blends well with the interpretive research project by giving participants the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes, to be valued as experts, and to be given a chance to work collaboratively with the researcher. The recommended size of a focus group is, according to Hancock (1998:11) between six to ten participants. A group smaller than six limits the potential on the amount of collective information. More than ten may make it difficult for everyone in the group to interact and participate. The samples used in qualitative research are thus small, in order to allow for intensive study, and they may or may not be pre-specified/pre-formed (Hancock 1998:11).

5.2.2.3 *The recording of the interviews*

All the interviews conducted in this study will be recorded. According to Kraines (2006:90) the advantages of recording interviews are manifold. A dictaphone will be used to capture the accounts of the participants' responses *verbatim*, thereby ensuring accuracy. (All interviews in this research project will be translated to English, irrespective of the language in which they will be conducted). By making use of a dictaphone it will be possible to carefully listen to and to concentrate on the interviews. Another advantage of the tape recorder is that it ensures that the entire interview is captured, thereby providing complete and accurate data. Because tape recorders are often perceived as intrusive, and because some people may feel uncomfortable when their opinions are recorded, the researcher will obtain permission from the participants beforehand to make use of them.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Hancock (1998:4) and McMillan & Schumacher (2001:35-38) outline four qualitative research designs, namely phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and case study. The differences between these research designs are mainly concerned with the research questions, the persons or situations being studied, and the manner in which the data are analyzed, interpreted and presented.

In this study a combination of ethnography and the grounded theory will be employed. A brief description of each of these two designs is given below.

- *Ethnography/field research.* Ethnography is a method used in descriptive studies of cultures and people. Ethnographic research studies an intact cultural group which can be any group of people who share a common social experience, geographical location, religion or other social characteristic of

interest. The cultural parameters are that the people under investigation have something in common (Hancock 1998:4-5). Ethnographic studies entail extensive fieldwork by the researcher. Data collection techniques include both formal and informal interviews, with participants often being interviewed on several occasions. This method is consequently very time-consuming and requires that the researcher spends long periods of time in the field.

- *Grounded theory*. This research design was developed by two sociologists, Glaser and Strauss, and uses various data collection techniques such as interviews and observations (Hancock 1998:5). When applying the grounded theory, the researcher aims to generate hypotheses and theories, rather than to test a theory. The researcher does not start off with a hypothesis, but typically starts with a loosely formulated question. As he/she proceeds he/she often develops a theory (from the data collected) around the research problem. The main feature of the grounded theory design is the development of new theories through the collection and analysis of data about a phenomenon, using a process known as constant comparative analysis. In this process data are transcribed and examined for content purposes immediately after being collected. The grounded theory claims that new knowledge often emerges from analysis and explanations of the data. This new knowledge is then often used to develop new theories about a phenomenon. New theories thus begin their conception as the researcher recognizes new ideas and new themes from what participants have said (Hancock 1998:6).

This study will mainly adopt an ethnographic design within an interpretivist and constructivist paradigm. Qualitative research or interpretive designs highlight the meaningfulness of human action and thinking from the participants' perspective. This means that the qualitative researcher attempts to interpret data from the perspective of the population being studied. Interpretive designs advance a new interpretation on existing texts (Hancock 1998:5) which, in this study, is the reality of the loss of a value system in the South African society. Interpretive designs also propose that phenomena should be studied as they occur in their natural setting, and they aim to present the

reality of participants from their own points of view (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:15-16, 423; Hancock 1998:2). The interpretivist framework holds the view that knowledge is created by describing people's beliefs, their value systems, their intentions, and their attribution of meaning and self-understanding, and not by visible phenomena only (Hoepfl 1997:3; Denzin & Lincoln in <http://www.computing.dcu.ie/~hruskin/RM2.htm>, 2008:2, 3).

5.4 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The aim of educational research is to generate understanding so as to empower stakeholders to improve a situation or a social phenomenon, or to improve educational practices by using methods that enable researchers to discover the cultural meaning of the context of their research (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:3; Hancock 1998:2). As a result the chosen research methods should provide the means to discover reality through understanding the setting, as well as the problems researchers wish to investigate. The researcher as the key instrument in qualitative research attempts to construct a social reality and cultural meaning by striving to understand people's views with regards to the research questions. This occurs through the researcher's participation in the lives of the participants. In qualitative research, especially, the researcher plays the role of an active learner and listener who can tell the story from the participants' point of view, rather than as an expert who passes judgment on participants and their opinions. Strauss & Corbin (in Hoepfl 1997:3) assert that the researcher must possess 'theoretical sensitivity'. This concept indicates an awareness of the subtleties of the meaning of data. It refers to the attribute of having the insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and the capability to separate the pertinent from that which is not. During the interviews the researcher will listen to and express an interest in the participants, will follow up ideas, probe and encourage participants to respond. The researcher will attempt to make sure that the participants are comfortable, relaxed and at ease, and she will spend a few minutes with the participants to talk about generalities before starting with the formal interviews. This will be done to create a relaxed relationship with the participants and to establish

rapport. The topic will be introduced to all the participants before the interviews commence.

The researcher will obtain permission from the Provincial Department of Education (PDoE) in the Eastern Cape and the principals to conduct the research at the selected schools (see Appendices A, B and C). Participants will be allocated and appointments will be made with all of them prior to the interviews. It is also the researcher's task to conduct and record the interviews.

5.5 THE SELECTION OF THE SCHOOLS AND THE PARTICIPANTS

5.5.1 The selection and profile of the schools

The schools will be purposefully selected to represent the different types of schools (former Model C schools which are in urban areas, a school in a township and a school in a rural area) and the different socio-economic groups (affluent, middle class and impoverished areas) that are representative of the South African society. Four secondary schools will be selected from the Amathole district in East London, where the researcher resides: one former Model C school, School A, is in an affluent community; the second former Model C school, School B, is in a middle-upper class area; the third school, School C, is in a rural and impoverished area; and the fourth school, School D, is in a previously Coloured township in a community that is classified as impoverished-middle class. The two former Model C schools have a combination of White, African, and Coloured learners; School B also has the same combination but with a few Indian learners; the school in the rural area consists of African learners only; and the school in the previously Coloured township consists mainly of Coloured learners, with a few African learners. All schools are mixed gender schools. The participants will be learners, teachers and principals from the four schools. Community leaders and parents will be selected from the four communities in which the schools are situated. The schools will be selected through the process of convenience sampling. They are easily accessible and in close proximity to the researcher's place of residence.

Table 5.2 Profile of the schools

SCHOOLS	TYPE OF SCHOOL	AREA WHERE SCHOOL IS LOCATED	TYPE OF COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE SCHOOL IS LOCATED	RACIAL GROUPS OF LEARNERS IN THE SCHOOLS	RACIAL GROUPS OF TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOLS
School A	Former Model C school	Urban area	Affluent	Whites, Coloureds and Africans	Whites, Coloureds and Africans
School B	Former Model C school	Urban area	Middle-affluent	Whites, Coloureds, Africans and Indians	Whites, Coloureds and Africans
School C	Rural school	Rural area	Impoverished	Africans	Africans
School D	Township school	Urban area	Impoverished-middle class	Coloureds and Africans	Coloureds, Africans and Whites

5.5.2 The selection and profile of the participants

All the participants are selected due to the fact that they are important stakeholders in education, and because they can make a significant contribution in addressing the moral decay of society. There is also an interrelation and inter-involvement among these participants on the grounds that there has to be mutual participation among them.

5.5.2.1 *The learners*

A total of 200 questionnaires will be distributed to Grade 11 learners (fifty learners from each school) in the four schools. Thereafter in-depth focus group interviews will be conducted with twenty four learners – six from each school. Individual interviews will be

conducted with four learners, one from each school. The combination of questionnaires and interviews will provide better responses than would the questionnaires or interviews alone. With questionnaires the researcher can also reach a bigger number of learners. The learners will be selected through a process of purposeful sampling. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:175) attest that in purposeful sampling the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. Because of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgment can be made about which persons should be selected to provide the most relevant information. The teachers who will administer the questionnaires will be asked to select the learners. The rationale for selecting Grade 11 learners was based on the assumption that they have reached the developmental stage where they have already started internalizing values. They are also fairly literate and would not have trouble understanding the questions. A pilot study will be conducted with ten Grade 11 learners (five each) from two of the four schools. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:267) state that for a pilot study "it is best to locate a sample of subjects with characteristics similar to those that will be used in the study." The pilot testing provides an estimate of reliability about the questionnaire. The researcher will 'train' the teachers who administer the questionnaires. The results of the pilot study will provide guidelines in the finalization of the questionnaires.

Table 5.3 Profile of the learners (for the interviews)

LEARNERS FROM SCHOOLS	GENDER		RACIAL GROUP			AGE	N= 24
	F	M	W	A	C		
School A	3	3	4	1	1	16-18	6
School B	4	2	5	0	1	16-18	6
School C	2	4	0	6	0	16-19	6
School D	3	3	0	0	6	15-18	6
	12	12	9	7	8		N=24

5.5.2.2 *The teachers*

Focus group interviews will be conducted with four groups of teachers, consisting of six to eight teachers. One focus group interview will be conducted at each of the four selected schools. It is not easy to identify the most appropriate participants for a focus group. If a group is too heterogeneous, whether in terms of race, age, gender or class, the differences between the participants can have a considerable impact on their contributions. If a group is too homogeneous with regard to specific characteristics, diverse opinions and experiences may not be revealed. The researcher has no prior knowledge of the teachers who are to participate in the study because of only communicating with the principals. Principals will ask the teachers to participate in the study. Principals will be asked to select teachers from different age groups, and to, as far as possible, maintain a gender balance with the teacher participants.

Table 5.4 Profile of the teachers

TEACHERS FROM SCHOOLS	GENDER		RACIAL GROUP			AGE	N=27
	F	M	W	A	C		
School A	3	4	5	1	1	24-56	7
School B	4	2	3	1	2	25-54	6
School C	3	3	0	6	0	23-46	6
School D	3	5	0	2	6	23-50	8
	13	14	8	10	9		N=27

5.5.2.3 *The principals*

Individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the four principals of the selected schools. These interviews will be conducted during school hours in the principals' offices. Appointments will be made to meet with the principals prior to the interviews to discuss the research questions and the purpose of the interviews. This will

help them to 'prepare' themselves for the interviews. They can then also share the purpose of the research with the teachers.

Table 5.5 Profile of the principals

PRINCIPALS FROM SCHOOLS	GENDER		RACIAL GROUP			AGE	N=4
	F	M	W	A	C		
School A		1	1			56	1
School B		1	1			54	1
School C		1			1	59	1
School D	1			1		48	1
	1	3	2	1	1		N=4

5.5.2.4 *The parents*

The researcher will try her best to select parents who have learners in the selected schools. Alternatively, parents who reside in the communities where the schools are situated will be selected. Some of the learners and teachers who reside in the communities where the schools are situated will be asked to assist in contacting and assembling the parents, and with the identification of suitable venues.

Table 5.6 Profile of the parents

PARENTS FROM COMMUNITIES	GENDER		RACIAL GROUP			AGE	N=25
	F	M	W	A	C		
Community A (where School A is situated)	4	3	4	2	1	40-54	7
Community B (where School B is situated)	5	3	3	2	3	40-62	8
Community C (where School C is situated)	3	1	0	4	0	38-55	4
Community D (where School D is situated)	3	3	0	3	3	38-53	6
	15	10	7	11	7		N=25

5.5.2.5 *The community leaders*

Individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted with four community leaders from the respective communities. They will be purposefully selected because they are leaders in the same communities as the parents who will be selected. As a newcomer in the Eastern Cape, the researcher is not familiar with the communities. Therefore the learners and teachers identified who they think are leaders in their communities. The criteria for selection were that they should have made a significant contribution in the upliftment and improvement of their communities, and that they should still be actively involved in community upliftment projects. One community leader is a pastor of a church; the other one is a leader in her church; two of the community leaders are also teachers, and are students of the researcher. The community leaders who are teachers were interviewed in the researcher's office, while the other leaders were interviewed at venues they had selected.

Table 5.7 Profile of the community leaders

LEADERS FROM COMMUNITIES	GENDER		RACIAL GROUPS			AGE	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	N=4
	F	M	W	A	C			
Leader A (from Community A)		1		1		30	Involved with the establishment of neighbourhood watches in the community	1
Leader B (from Community B)		1	1			28	Involved with the improvement of the infrastructure in the community	1
Leader C (from Community C): a pastor		1			1	23	Involved in youth development projects in the church and in the community	1
Leader D (from Community D): a church leader	1			1		40	Involved with people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS	1
	1	3	1	2	1			N=4

5.6 DATA PROCESSING

5.6.1 Processing the questionnaires

Processing of the data from the questionnaires will be done using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, version 14 (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal 2008). Responses to the questionnaires will be coded and saved, making use of

computer software. Since the questionnaire data are non-numeric, they will have to be coded. This will be done by assigning a numeric code to each response. The coding will enable the conversion of the descriptive qualitative statements on the questionnaires to a nominal measurement form (Peers 1996). After coding and saving the data, the researcher will then clean the data set. This process involves inspection of the data to find omissions, illegal codes, logical inconsistencies, and improbabilities which could introduce measurement errors in the data, and the drawing of incorrect conclusions. Once this is completed, the researcher will group all the positive and the negative responses together. This will introduce the processing of data exploration and analysis, as is outlined in section 5.7 below.

5.6.2 The transcription and thematic collation of evidence

Transcribing is the process of producing a written version of the interview. After the interviews have been completed and recorded, they will be transcribed according to emerging themes and patterns. Constant comparative analysis, which is often used in the grounded theory and content analysis, will be used to transcribe the interviews. Constant comparative analysis is the process whereby the data collection and analysis occur concurrently and on an ongoing basis (Hancock 1998:15). The analysis of the data begins after the initial interviews, and continues after the rest of the interviews. The initial interview is transcribed as soon as possible and before the second and subsequent interviews are conducted. To make this possible, the researcher will make sure of having sufficient time to transcribe one interview before proceeding to the next. Content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of the text. The initial step in content analysis involves sorting or categorizing the content into themes. In this regard Hancock (1998:17) contends that the qualitative researcher has no system for pre-coding. Therefore he/she needs a method of identifying and labeling (coding) items of data which appear in the text of a transcript so that all the items of the data in one interview can be compared with the data collected from the other interviews.

5.6.3 The sorting and coding of the transcripts

The basic process of analyzing qualitative data starts by labeling or coding every item of information so that the differences and similarities between the items or themes can be recognized (Hancock 1998:16). This can be done through content analysis, which is a procedure for the categorization of verbal or behavioural data to classify, summarize and tabulate the data (Hancock 1998:17). After transcribing the interviews they are sorted according to themes and are colour-coded for easy identification and reference. Constant comparative analysis and content analysis make it easy to label and colour-code the emerging themes. The content is analyzed on two levels: the first level is a descriptive account of the data, which is what was actually said, with nothing read into it and nothing assumed about it. The second level is interpretive analysis, which is concerned with what is meant, inferred or implied by the responses (Hancock 1998:17).

5.7 DATA ANALYSIS

5.7.1 Analyzing the responses to the questionnaires

Learners' attitudes and involvement in the following factors will be analyzed and assessed: prevalence and frequency of substance abuse, the effects of substance abuse on learners, crime and learners' involvement in criminal activities, their involvement in physical and sexual violence and activities, the moral principles in the family and society, the proportion of learner absenteeism, the frequency of learner absenteeism from classes, the parents' awareness of and reactions to their children's drugs/alcohol use/abuse, and learners' attitudes regarding material possessions. All the results will be presented in tables or graphs.

5.7.2 Creating plausible interpretations of findings

The quality of the interpretation of the results is a function of how valid the underlying findings are. Thus, validity represents the most important stage of the research process

in both qualitative and quantitative research studies (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2005:11). Ironically, the more difficult aspect of validity resides at the level of interpreting data. How do researchers interpret the data? Is there a mutual meaning between what the participants said and how the researcher understood and interpreted what was said? McMillan & Schumacher (2001:198) concede that “the investigator has a responsibility to consider potential misinterpretations and misuses of the research and should make every effort to communicate results so that misunderstandings are minimized.” In this regard Terre Blanche *et al* (2006:275) concede that the researcher not only needs to understand what the participants mean but also the context in which it was said. This translates to the idea that words, actions and experiences can only be ascertained in relation to the contexts in which they occur.

Once the data have been collected and analyzed the researcher will proceed to the challenging task of interpreting and presenting the results or findings, and will, finally, write the report of the study. When the interpretation stage is reached, the researcher can indicate what he/she has learned from the data that were collected, and how this knowledge fits into the general body of knowledge in the field (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh 1985:393). In this regard Terre Blanche *et al* (2006:274) claim that the meaning of a written text should be established through piecing together the context of the text’s creation and thereby recreating the meaning of what was said. The constructivist and interpretivist researcher thus literally has to ‘create’ and ‘interpret’ the findings in an interactive process with what was researched. According to Ary *et al* (1985:389) the first step in analyzing the data is to refer to the research proposal to look at the original plans for presenting the data and performing the statistical analysis.

5.7.3 Testing for trustworthiness

Eisner (in Hoepfl 1997:7) and Hancock (1998:16-17) claim that one of the limitations of qualitative research is that there are no operationally defined ‘truth’ tests to apply to qualitative research. Instead, the researcher bears the burden of discovering, interpreting and reporting the importance of what is observed, and of establishing a

plausible connection between what is observed and the conclusions he/she draws after the data had been analyzed. This discovery has to be credible, especially from the point of view of the participants and the readers, because the aim of any research is to gather knowledge about a particular phenomenon or topic. Daymon & Holloway (2002:93) identify four criteria by means of which to establish trustworthiness, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The trustworthiness of data is thus an important aspect of qualitative research and is related to validity, reliability and authenticity (Daymon & Holloway 2002:89-93). According to Lincoln & Guba (in Hoepfl 1997:8) the basic question addressed by the notion of trustworthiness is simply: “How can an enquirer persuade his or her audience that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?”

5.7.3.1 *Validity*

Validity is central to a research project and in the way the researcher selects his/her research designs. When deciding on a research design the main task is to specify and combine the key elements and methods in such a way as to maximize validity (Tredoux & Smith 2006:162). Validity in qualitative research has to do with whether the methods, approaches, designs and techniques employed in the research actually relate to, or measure the issue or issues you wish to explore. Maxwell (in Daymon & Holloway 2002:90) maintains that it is the credibility of descriptions, explanations, observations, interpretations and conclusions of the research. For McMillan & Schumacher (2001:407) validity in qualitative research refers to “the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher.” It refers to the truth or falsity of propositions generated by research.

The concept thus implies the existence of a reality that is often unknown and for which knowledge needs to be gained. Validity addresses the following questions: Do researchers actually observe what they think they observe? Do researchers actually hear the meanings that they think they hear? McMillan & Schumacher (2001:167) distinguish between internal and external validity in qualitative research. Internal validity

expresses the intent to which extraneous variables have been controlled or accounted for. External validity refers to the extent to which the results and conclusions can be generalized to other people and settings (Tredoux & Smith 2006:165). Various strategies can be used to enhance validity in qualitative research, such as making use of multiple researchers, prolonged fieldwork, mechanically recorded data, in-depth interviews and a participant-researcher approach. In this research, a certain degree of validity was established by means of conducting in-depth follow-up interviews with learners, by placing the researcher in the empirical field over a prolonged period of time, by defining how the research design is connected to the theoretical framework, and by selecting the research methods that best respond to the research questions. The greater the coherence among these, the higher the level of validity. This is so because it would have demonstrated a sound understanding of the field that is being researched, together with the informed use of adequate strategies of inquiry.

In order to promote the validity of the findings the data were triangulated by using different forms of data collection, namely questionnaires, interviews and participant observation. Participant observation was enhanced by the fact that the researcher has been a teacher for seven years, had taught Grade 11 learners and had been head of Grade 11s for one year. During the interviews the researcher also took note of the hidden meaning of answers, as well as of the non-verbal communication of the participants.

5.7.3.2 *Reliability*

McMillan & Schumacher (in Kraines 2006:93-94) concur that rather than looking for consistency of behaviour, qualitative researchers are interested in the accuracy of their observations. Hence, reliability is the extent to which what is recorded as data is what actually happened in the setting that was studied. It refers to the consistency of measurement – the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:244). Daymon & Holloway (2002:90) claim that qualitative researchers rarely discuss reliability because qualitative research is seldom wholly consistent and replicable. Even

if the same research is repeated by other researchers, there is no guarantee that they will achieve the same results, even in similar circumstances and conditions. However, their implied definition of validity is often their loyalty and commitment to present the people and settings as truthfully as possible.

5.7.3.3 *Authenticity*

Authenticity refers to the reliable reconstruction of participants' opinions and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher 2001). Daymon & Holloway (2002:93) assert that a study is authentic when the researcher can give a 'true' reporting of participants' ideas and opinions – when the study is fair, and when it helps participants and others to understand their world and improve it. It can safely be said that in this study authentic descriptions and recordings of participants will be captured, since a dictaphone will be used during the interviews. Accounts of interviews will be recorded *verbatim*, and transcripts will be phrased in the participants' own language. Selected quotations from some of the participants' responses will be provided to illustrate what they actually said, and to illustrate how what was said correlates or does not correlate with the literature findings (see Chapter 6). For interpretive research authenticity is also enhanced when the research reflects the qualities of fairness and balance. In this regard Denzin & Lincoln (in Mariaye 2006:173) state that "including a variety of voices by giving space to the variety of views and perspectives offered by diverse stakeholders in the text is one way of reducing the potential marginalization of certain categories of stakeholders." It was easier to establish a gender balance among the teachers than it was for the other groups of participants, because the participants were purposefully selected. Although the researcher asked principals to identify an equal number of males and females to participate in the research, the researcher had to settle for those participants who volunteered to participate. The same applies for the parents. Gender and age balance could not be established for the principals, because most principals of the selected schools are males.

According to Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2005:6) the interpretivist paradigm supports the notion that data should be collected and the phenomena studied as they occur in their natural setting. The fact that the interviews will be conducted in the natural settings of the participants can also be regarded as a contributing factor to the authenticity of the research.

5.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN RESEARCH

Cavan (in Cohen *et al* 2000:56) defines ethics as

“a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case, the respect for human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature.”

Interviews, also, have an ethical dimension because they involve personal interaction and produce information about a human condition. According to Cohen *et al* (2000:292) and McMillan & Schumacher (2001:197-198) three main ethical areas can be identified when conducting interviews namely informed consent, confidentiality and the consequences of the interview. It is not easy to lay down ethical rules for qualitative research because ethical matters are, by definition, contestable (Cohen *et al* 2000:292; Ary *et al* 1985:383-386). However, it is possible to raise a number of ethical questions to which answers need to be given before the interviews commence:

- Have the participants given their informed consent?
- Has the permission been obtained in writing or orally?
- How much information should be given in advance?
- What should be regarded as legitimate private or public knowledge?
- How can adequate information be provided if the study is exploratory?

- Have the possible consequences of the research been made clear to the participants?
- Has care been taken to prevent any harmful effects of the research to the participants (and to others)?
- To what extent do any benefits outweigh the potential harm done by the research, and how justifiable is this for conducting the research?
- In what respect should the researcher's own agenda and views dominate? What will happen if the researcher's interpretation differs from that of the interviewee? Should interviewees be told of the interpretations, even if they did not ask for them?
- In what way will the research benefit the participants?
- Who else will benefit from the research?
- How will the data and transcripts be verified, and by whom?
- Who will have access to the data?

According to Cohen *et al* (2000:56) and McMillan & Schumacher (2001:420) social scientists generally have a responsibility not only to their profession in its search for knowledge and in its quest for truth, but also to the subjects on whom they depend. Since much research in education involves the study of people, often children, special care must be taken to ensure that all participants are treated fairly and ethically. Whatever the specific nature of the research, social and qualitative researchers must be sensitive to, and must take into account the effects of the research on participants, and they have to act in such a way as to preserve their participants' dignity as human beings. Ethical principles in qualitative research include, but are not limited to, informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, possible harm to subjects, and privacy (see Chapter 1).

In this research care will be taken to address as many of the above questions as possible. All participants will be informed in advance of the research and what is expected from them; they will thus be able to decide whether they object to being interviewed. They will also be informed that they may withdraw from the study at any

stage if they wish to. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:196) state in this regard that participants should be informed of all the different aspects of the research that may influence their willingness to participate. They continue to state that the researcher should be open and honest with the participants, and inform them of the purpose of the research. No participant will be coerced or put under pressure to participate in this study. Written permission will be obtained from the PDoE in the Eastern Cape to conduct the research. Letters will be delivered to all four participating principals to inform them of the research, and to ask their permission to take part in the research (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:198). The identity of all participants will be protected. The researcher will also inform the principals that the names of the schools will be kept anonymous. No names will be mentioned during the analysis of the interviews (e.g. the names of hospitals, churches or community-based centers) that may reveal the schools or communities. The researcher will also inform participants that they can refrain from answering questions which they feel are too personal or sensitive.

5.9 RELATING THE ARGUMENT TO RELEVANT RESEARCH IN LITERATURE

Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2005:4) claim that the traditional literature review, which is undertaken in the majority of studies, involves systematically identifying, locating, and analyzing documents containing information related to the research problem and research topic. The literature review thus enables the reader and researcher to gain insight into the research topic. The researcher, in his/her argument, can support, oppose or criticize the literature review. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:108) state that literature reviews, if conducted carefully and presented well, add much to the understanding of the selected problem, and help place the results of a study in perspective. Without reviews of existing literature, it would be difficult to build a body of accepted knowledge on an educational topic.

The argument that stems from this research project is that the moral degeneration of the South African society is linked to a lack of values education, and that this moral decay has certain socio-educational implications for the society. Specific research questions

that arose from the research problem are outlined in Chapter 1. The researcher used primary and secondary sources that support the argument regarding the moral decay of the South African society. Furthermore, the researcher tried to organize the literature logically as it relates to the selection and significance of the research problem (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:132).

McMillan & Schumacher (2001:134) are of the opinion that qualitative researchers locate and criticize most of the literature for their study during data collection and analysis. They continuously do a review of the literature because the exact focus and questions evolve as the research progresses.

Although a literature review helps the researcher to gain further knowledge regarding the problem, it is not without limitations. Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2005:4) concede that, most notably, the appropriateness, comprehensiveness and representativeness of literature reviews are affected by:

- the selective inclusion of studies, often based on the researcher's own subjective assessment of the quality of the underlying studies;
- the failure to examine the characteristics and attributes of the studies and potential explanations for consistent and contradictory findings across studies;
- the failure to consider the context in which each of the investigations took place;
- differential subjective weighing in the interpretations of study results;
- confirmation bias;
- over-reliance on findings from either quantitative or qualitative studies; and
- the failure to examine moderating and/or mediating variables in the study.

5.10 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of a study cannot adequately be explained without referring to the motivation for and relevance of the study, the research design and the aims and

objectives of the research (see Chapter 1). The aim of any research project is to identify a problem and to attempt to come up with solutions and/or recommendations, and to advance an understanding of a particular social situation.

In this research the aim was to investigate the role of values education in addressing the moral degeneration of the South African society. Numerous researchers have written about the moral decay in South Africa, as is evident from the literature review, and the literature review employed in this study supports the notion that our society is morally unstable. The question that needs to be asked is: Why is our society still morally in decline, even after so many scholars have explored and investigated the issue? What difference will this study bring about? What new contribution can this study make in order to make the South African society more morally conscious?

The answers to these questions are not easy. Apart from the factors that are discussed in Chapter 3 of this study, there could be other possible reasons that cause moral decay. One possibility could be that there is a segment of the South African society that does not want to change the *status quo*. Most people know what to do in order to improve the moral fiber of our society; they just choose not to do anything. South Africans will benefit from a society that is free of crime, violence, alcohol abuse and lawlessness. Hancock (1998:107) claims that for some qualitative researchers, the purpose of their research is obligatory – something that has to be done because of a class assignment or a job. For most, however, it is a kind of personal passion; the satisfaction of a boundless curiosity and interest about the constructions of our social worlds. When researchers do research because of the latter reason, the research topic becomes deeply personal, and the process of doing qualitative research can engender intensity and a kind of cognitive passion (Hancock 1998:107). As a parent, a teacher and a South African I had much to gain from this study – the research was thus a personal quest.

This study attempts to acquire a renewed perspective on how to address the issue of moral decay through education in South African schools. The South African society, however, is far too large, pluralistic and complex to find a representative sample of all its communities and educational structures. This study will therefore attempt to focus on

devising general educational guidelines that can be used in the communities where the research was done. Ideally the value system of the children and the adults in the project will be enhanced in such a way that these guidelines can be used to improve the situation in most of the schools and communities in the country.

5.11 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to outline the research methods and research designs employed in the study to come to an understanding of the moral decay of the South African society. As demonstrated in this chapter, no single method is superior to another to help us come to this understanding. Care was taken to choose the research methods and research designs that best respond to the research questions.

In the next chapter the findings and analysis of the data will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the findings from the questionnaires and interviews will be presented, analyzed and discussed. The themes developed in this chapter have been generated from the questionnaires and the interviews that were conducted with the participants. The interviews were conducted in the participants' home languages although some participants felt comfortable responding to the questions in English. (The researcher is fluent in all three languages in which the interviews were conducted). Due to the fact that the participants often spoke different languages in one focus group interview, the questions were asked in English, except in cases where all the participants in one focus group spoke a language other than English. But even though the questions (for the focus group interviews) were asked in English, the researcher had to interpret in instances where the questions were not clear. The individual interviews were conducted in the participants' home languages. For the sake of accessibility all the interviews/quotations in this chapter were translated to English. I tried my best to translate the responses as accurately as possible, thereby attempting to give an accurate report of what was said.

The analysis and interpretation of the data were carried out in the light of the research objectives as set out in Chapter 1. The objectives were covered in detail in the chapters on the literature review. In view of these objectives, the aim of the empirical research was to determine the extent of the moral decay of the society and the influence it has on the frame of reference of adolescents. The outcome of the literature study led to an exploration of the degree to which children are exposed to and involved in drug/alcohol abuse, criminal and sexual activities, undisciplined behaviour at school and at home,

and moral and sexual licentiousness. These factors are manifestations of the lack of a positive value system in adolescents.

6.2 ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Learners from the four selected schools were given questionnaires (see Appendix D) to complete in order to determine their value systems and their attitudes toward moral values in their homes and in society. The qualitative analysis of the information in the questionnaires brought the following to light:

Table 6.1 Demographic data of the learners

Characteristics		Frequency	% age responses
<i>Your school location</i>			
	Rural area (including farm)	64	40.0
	Urban area (including township)	96	60.0
<i>Your gender</i>			
	Male	56	35.0
	Female	104	65.0
<i>Your age</i>			
	11-15 years	2	1.25
	16 years or older	158	98.75
<i>Number of children in your household</i>			
	An only child	9	5.63
	Between 2 and 5	136	85.0
	More than 5	15	9.38
<i>Are you the oldest child in your family?</i>			
	Yes	51	31.9
	No	109	68.1
<i>Do you live in a child headed family?</i>			
	Yes	8	5.0
	No	152	95.0
<i>I live with</i>			
	my mother and father	79	49.4
	my mother only	25	15.6
	my father only	5	3.13
	my mother and other relatives	36	22.5
	my father and other relatives	2	1.25
	other relatives	13	8.13
<i>Are your parents/people you live with employed?</i>			
	Yes	106	66.3
	No	54	33.7
<i>My church is</i>			
	Methodist	52	32.5
	Roman Catholic	24	15.0
	Assemblies of God	37	23.1
	Dutch Reformed Church	3	1.88
	Apostolic Faith Mission	25	15.6

	African Gospel Church (including Zion)	3	1.88
	Bahai Faith	4	2.5
	None	12	7.5

Table 6.1 shows that the majority (65%) of the learners were girls, while 35% were boys. The resultant gender composition was by chance. The majority (60%) of the learners live in urban areas, which include townships. The majority (99%) of the learners were 16 years or older – this is because the main criterion for selecting the learner respondents is that they should be in Grade 11. Many of them live in households with between 2 and 5 children, and they are not the oldest in these families. Furthermore, the majority of the learners indicated that they live with their mothers and fathers. Very few (5%) live in child headed homes. One third of the learners' parents are unemployed.

Most of the learners attend church. The majority attend the Methodist Church, followed by the Assemblies of God Church, while about 16% indicated that they belong to the Apostolic Faith Mission. A few learners did not identify with any church.

Themes that emerged from the questionnaires

The following themes/tendencies emerged after the questionnaires had been analyzed: a) drug and alcohol abuse; b) incidents of crime; c) involvement in physical or sexual violence/activities; d) parents' awareness and reaction to their children's use of drugs/alcohol; e) strategies used by parents and teachers to dissuade children from using drugs/alcohol; f) truancy; g) learner absenteeism; h) disruption of classes by learners; i) cell phone usage by learners during school hours/classes; and j) learners' attitude regarding moral principles.

The learners' responses to the questionnaires and analysis thereof will be reflected in tables and graphs.

a) **Drug/alcohol use**

Table 6.2 Prevalence of drug/alcohol use

Characteristics		Do you still use drugs /alcohol?		Total
Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?		Yes	No	
Yes, alcohol only	Frequency	15	55	70
	(% within) Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?	21.42857	78.57143	100
	(% within) Do you still use drugs?	68.18182	39.85507	43.75
Yes, drugs only	Frequency	0	2	2
	(% within) Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?	0	100	100
	(% within) Do you still use drugs?	0	1.449275	1.25
Both drugs and alcohol	Frequency	7	18	25
	(% within) Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?	28	72	100
	(% within) Do you still use drugs?	31.81818	13.04348	15.625
No, neither drugs nor alcohol	Frequency	0	63	63
	(% within) Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?	0	100	100
	(% within) Do you still use drugs?	0	45.65217	39.375
Total	Frequency	22	138	160
	(% within) Have you ever used drugs or alcohol?	13.75	86.25	100
	(% within) Do you still use drugs?	100	100	100

Table 6.2 shows the proportion of learners who indicated that they use drugs and/or alcohol. Less than half of the learners (43.75%) have used alcohol only, while 15.63% have used both drugs and alcohol. But 39.38% of the learners indicated that they have not used drugs or alcohol.

However, many of those who used drugs/alcohol seem to have stopped, namely 86% of the learners indicated that they no longer use drugs or alcohol. Only 13.75% of the learners in the sample still use substances.

Figure 6.1 Percentage of learners and drugs/alcohol type that they used

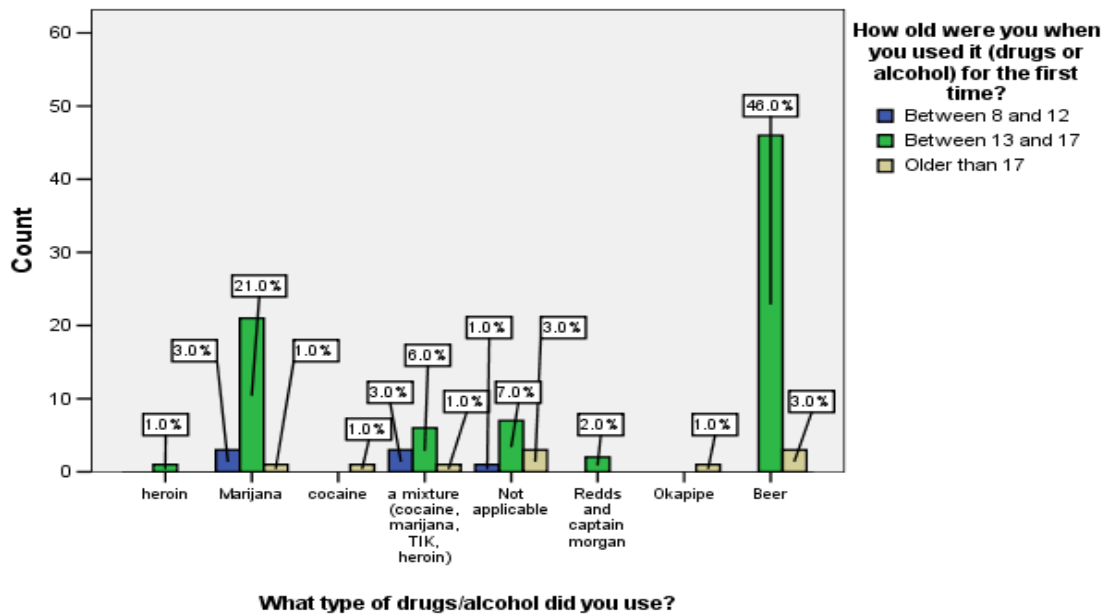


Figure 1: Types of drugs / alcohol taken by age groups

Figure 6.2 The proportion of learners who still take drugs

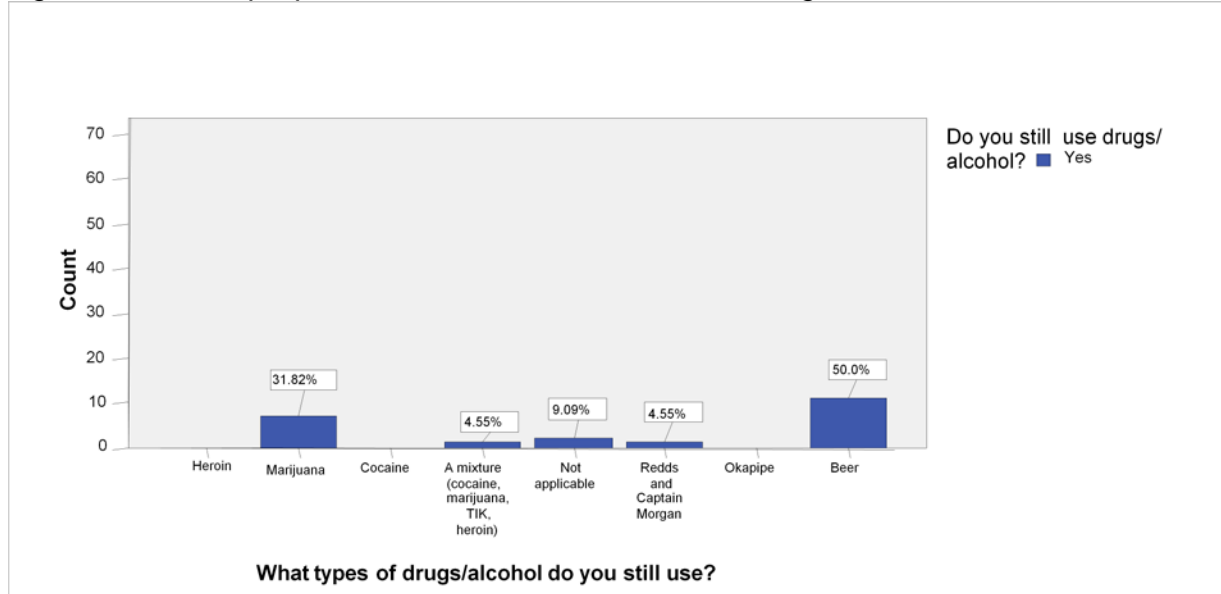


Figure 6.2 shows the types of drugs and alcohol which are used by some learners. More than 30% of the learners still take marijuana. A smaller proportion (4.55%) still takes a mixture of cocaine, marijuana, TIK, and heroin. In terms of alcohol, many learner (50%) still drink beer, while a few drink Redds and Captain Morgan.

Table 6.3 Frequency and reasons for drug/alcohol use

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Who introduced you to drugs/alcohol?			
	Friends	59	36.875
	Friends and classmates	16	10
	Relatives	20	12.5
	I do not use drugs	58	36.25
	Not applicable	6	3.75
	Self	1	0.625
Sources of your drug/alcohol			
	Friends	18	11.25
	<i>Shebeens/taverns/nightclubs</i>	67	41.875
	Pimps	4	2.5
	Relatives	5	3.125
	Multiple sources	5	3.125
	I do not use drugs	52	32.5
	Not applicable	9	5.625
I use drugs or alcohol because			
	It makes me feel good	22	13.75
	I'm under pressure from my friends to take them	9	5.625
	They are easily available	8	5
	Usually I'm bored	22	13.75
	Most of my friends use drugs	6	3.75
	Multiple reasons	6	3.75
	Not applicable	66	41.25
	To hang out with friends and enjoy myself	7	4.375
	Just thought I should try	8	5
	When I am upset	3	1.875
	I no longer drink	3	1.875
I usually use drugs/alcohol when I'm			
	At home	14	8.75
	Out with my friends (e.g. at parties, nightclubs etc.)	66	41.25
	At school	2	1.25
	At different places	8	5
	I do not use drugs/alcohol	55	34.375
	Not applicable	8	5
	No comment	7	4.375
How often do you take drugs/use alcohol?			
	Usually on weekends only	39	24.375

	During the week and on weekends	4	2.5
	Whenever I'm stressed	6	3.75
	When I'm with my friends	15	9.375
	I do not use drugs/alcohol	61	38.125
	Not applicable	8	5
	I drank once	3	1.875
	Whenever I feel like it	19	11.875
	No comment	5	3.125

As reflected in Table 6.3, the majority of the learners (36.87%) who use drugs/alcohol were introduced to them by their friends. Relatives (12.5%) also acted as a starting point to the use of these drugs and/or alcohol. Among the learners who use drugs/alcohol, *shebeens* and nightclubs are the main places where they use these substances. It is not surprising therefore that the majority (41.25%) of learners use drugs/alcohol when they are out with friends at events such as parties. A small percentage (8.75%) use these substances while at home. The majority of the users (24.37%) use drugs/alcohol mainly during weekends.

The main reason for learners' use of drugs/alcohol is that it makes them feel good, or because they are/were bored. But what learners actually meant by 'feeling good' or because they are/were 'bored' is unclear. This factor will be explored in the individual interviews that will follow the questionnaires.

Figure 6.3 Effects of drugs/alcohol on learners

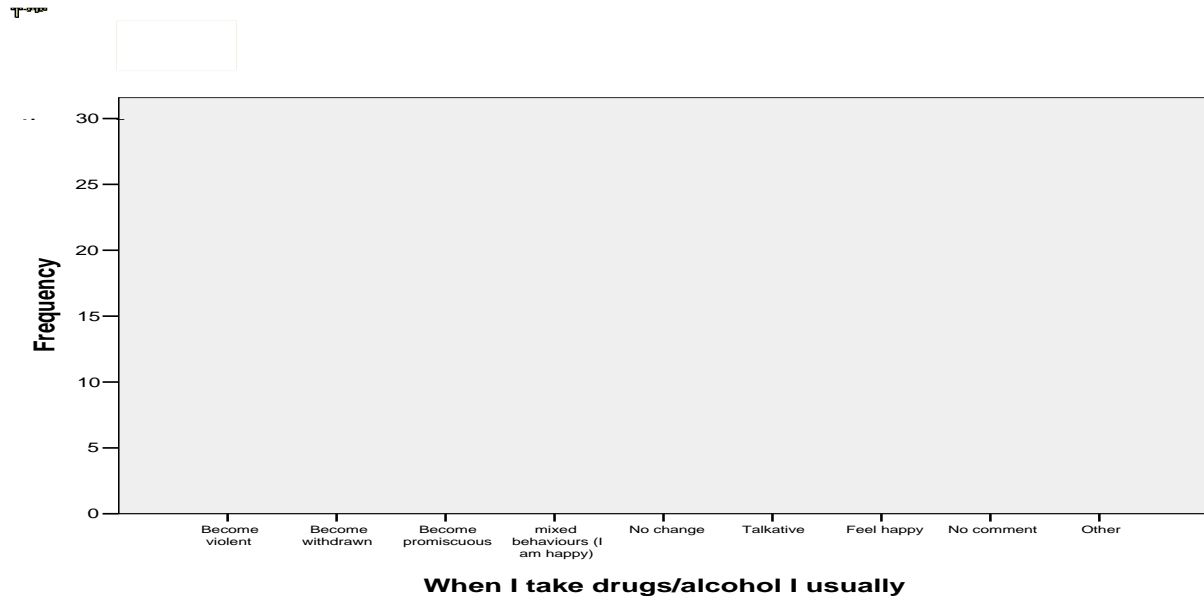


Figure 6.3 shows that the use of drugs/alcohol by learners has a noticeable effect on their behaviour. Whereas 10% felt no change, 6% of them indicated that they became violent, talkative, and promiscuous. Furthermore, 30% said they become more withdrawn. There were some learners who indicated that they felt happy.

b) Incidents of crime

Table 6.4 Forms of crimes committed by learners

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Stealing	14	8.75
Robbery	3	1.88
Vandalism	5	3.13
A combination of the above	5	3.13
Other (e.g., under-age drinking)	4	2.50
No (I have not committed any crime)	129	80.63
Total	160	100.00

Table 6.4 shows the forms of crimes committed by learners. The majority (80.63%) indicated that they have not committed any crime. But among the learners who

committed some form of crime, stealing proved to be the most frequent (8.75%), followed by vandalism (3.13%).

Table 6.5 Reasons for committing crimes

What was your reason for committing the crime(s)?	Frequency	%
No comment	136	85
I needed money	5	3.13
For entertainment	4	2.5
I felt bored	2	1.25
I kicked down the school fence so as to 'bunk' class	2	1.25
It gave us something to do at night	2	1.25
Just to see if I would be caught and what would happen	2	1.25
Peer pressure	2	1.2
I stole because the money was available	2	1.25
For satisfaction	1	0.63
I didn't study for the test so I copied	1	0.63
I raped because I wanted sex	1	0.63
Total	160	100

Table 6.5 shows that the majority (85%) of the learners had no comment regarding the reasons for committing crimes. It should be noted that most of these learners were among those who had not committed any crime, as reflected in Table 6.4

Some learners gave their reasons for committing crimes. Learners who were involved in theft indicated that stolen because: a) they wanted money, (b) satisfaction, (c) they felt bored, or (d) they wanted to see if they would be caught and what would happen. Peer pressure played some role in this process. Learners who were involved in vandalism indicated that they did so because: (a) "I kicked down the school fence so as to *bunk* classes" and (b) "It gave us something to do at night." Learners who committed rape indicated that they did so because they wanted sex. Those learners who were involved in under-age drinking were among the ones who made no comment regarding their motivation for their actions.

Table 6.6 Motivation for stealing

Have you ever had to steal in order to buy drugs/alcohol?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	4.38
No	153	95.6

Total	160	100
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Table 6.6 shows that less than 5% of the learners indicated that they stole in order to get money to buy the drugs/alcohol that they used.

Figure 6.4 Feelings of learners after they had committed crimes

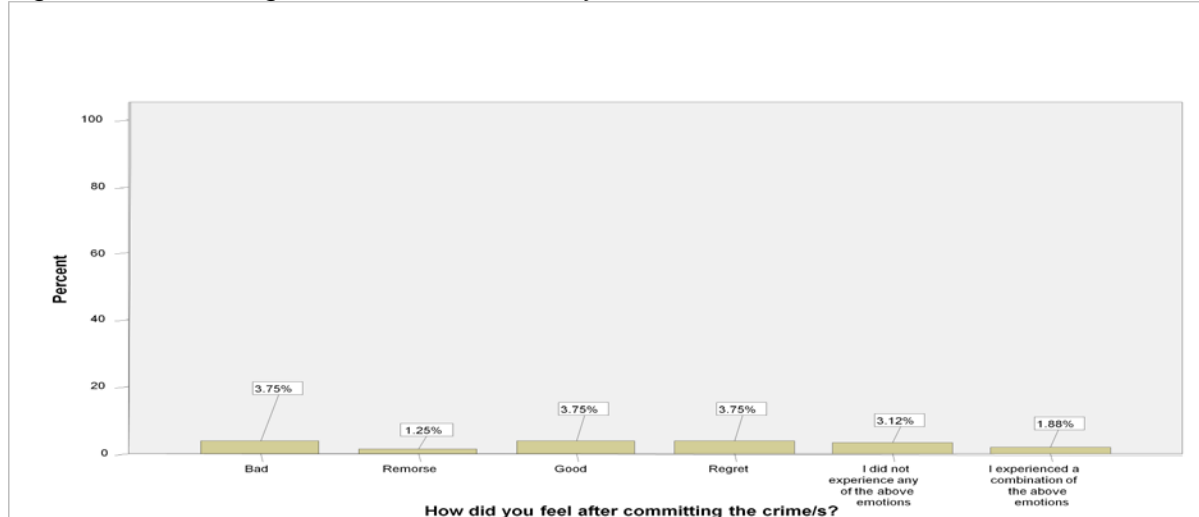


Figure 6.4 shows the feelings of learners after they had committed crimes. Less than 5% of learners had feelings varying from remorse and regret to that of delight. A few did not experience any of these emotions, and did not specify what emotions they had experienced.

c) Involvement in physical or sexual activities/violence

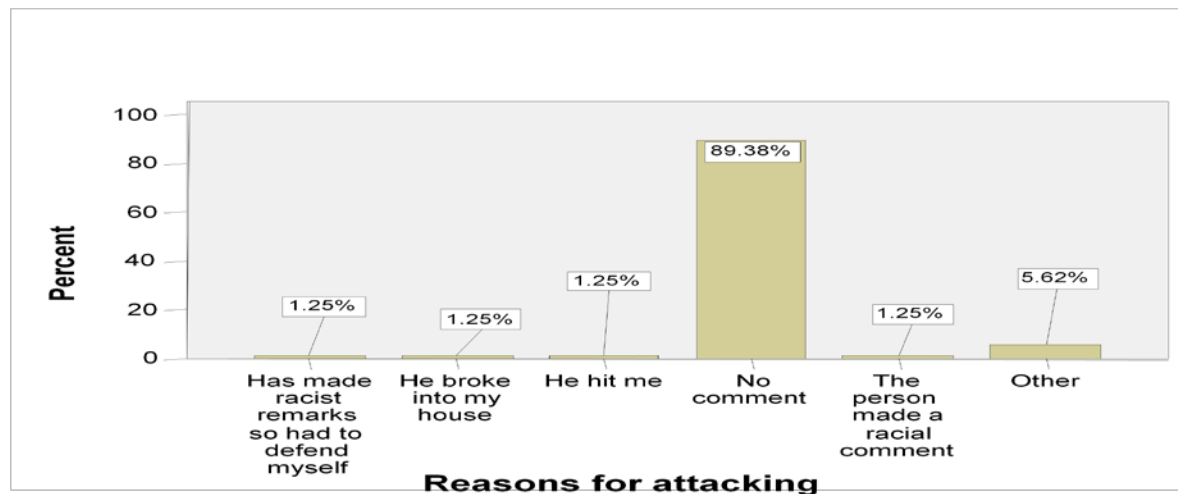
Table 6.7 Learner involvement in physical violence

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Have you ever been involved in a fight in/out of school?		
Yes	54	33.8
No	106	66.3
Have you attacked anyone in/out of school?		
Yes	27	16.9
No	133	83.1

If you have been involved in a fight, are you the one who started the fight?		
Yes	6	3.75
No	154	96.3

Table 6.7 shows that one third of the learners have been involved in physical violence. This involves fighting, which took place in-/outside the school premises. Furthermore, about 16% of the learners indicated that they had attacked others.

Figure 6.5 Reasons for being involved in violence



The reasons that learners gave for being involved in fights or violence are shown in Figure 6.5. The reasons varied, and suggest that their actions were prompted by others. The majority of the learners made no comment because they had not been involved in flights. The 5.62% of other reasons that were cited includes: (a) she was gossiping about me, (b) he/she was on my case for a long time, so I got fed-up, (c) we had an

argument, (d) I needed some money and was influenced by friends, and (e) he beat my father.

Table 6.8 Learner involvement in sexual activities

Characteristics		How old were you when you had sex for the first time?				Total
Are you sexually active?		8-12	13-17	Older than 17	Not applicable	
Yes	Count	4	71	10	0	85
	(% within) Are you sexually active?	4.71	83.529	11.765	0	100
No	Count	0	0	0	75	75
	(% within) Are you sexually active?	0	0	0	100	100
Total	Count	4	71	10	75	160
	(% within) Are you sexually active?	2.5	44.375	6.25	46.88	100

Table 6.8 shows the sexual status of learners and the age at which they got involved in sexual activities. The majority of the learners indicated that they have had sexual encounters. Approximately 83% of learners were between 13 and 17 years when they had sex for the first time and 10% had sex after the age of 17 years.

Table 6.9 Proportion of learners who used protection during sex

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Did you use protection?		
Yes	57	35.625
No	42	26.25
Not applicable	61	38.125
Was your first sexual encounter consensual (in other words, did you and your partner agree to have sex)?		
Yes	69	43.125
No	30	18.75
Not applicable	61	38.125
Was your first sexual experience with your boyfriend/girlfriend?		
Yes	62	38.75
No	37	23.125

Not applicable	61	38.125
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As Table 6.9 shows, 35.63% of the learners indicated that they used protection during their sexual encounters. A quarter of the learners used no protection. While learners engaged in sexual activities, it was not consensual for some. Approximately 18% indicated that the sex was not consensual. Furthermore, for 23% of the participants, their first sexual experience was not with their boy/girlfriend.

Table 6.10 Proportion of learner pregnancy

Characteristics		Frequency	%
If you are female, have you ever been pregnant?	Yes	8	5.0
	No	92	57.5
	Not applicable	60	37.5
If you are female, are you a mother?	Yes	7	4.375
	No	93	58.125
	Not applicable	60	37.5

Table 6.10 shows that 5% of the female learners indicated that they had been pregnant. A small percentage indicated that they are mothers.

d) Parents' awareness and reactions to children's drug/alcohol use

Table 6.11 Parents' awareness of children's drug usage

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Are your parents or teachers aware of the fact that you take drugs/use alcohol?		
Yes	22	13.8
No	66	41.3
I do not use drugs/alcohol	72	45.0
Have your parents/teachers tried to dissuade you from using drugs/alcohol?		
Yes	21	13.1
No	139	86.9
Do any of your parents use drugs/alcohol?		
Yes	48	30.0
No	112	70

Table 6.11 shows that, while 13.8% of the learners indicated that their parents are aware of their use of drugs/alcohol, there were a sizeable 41.3% whose parents were unaware of their behaviour, while 13% of the learners indicated that their parents/teachers who were aware of their drug/alcohol use tried to dissuade them from continuing to use it. A sizeable proportion (30%) of parents also use drugs or drink alcohol.

e) Strategies parents and teachers use to dissuade children from abusing substances

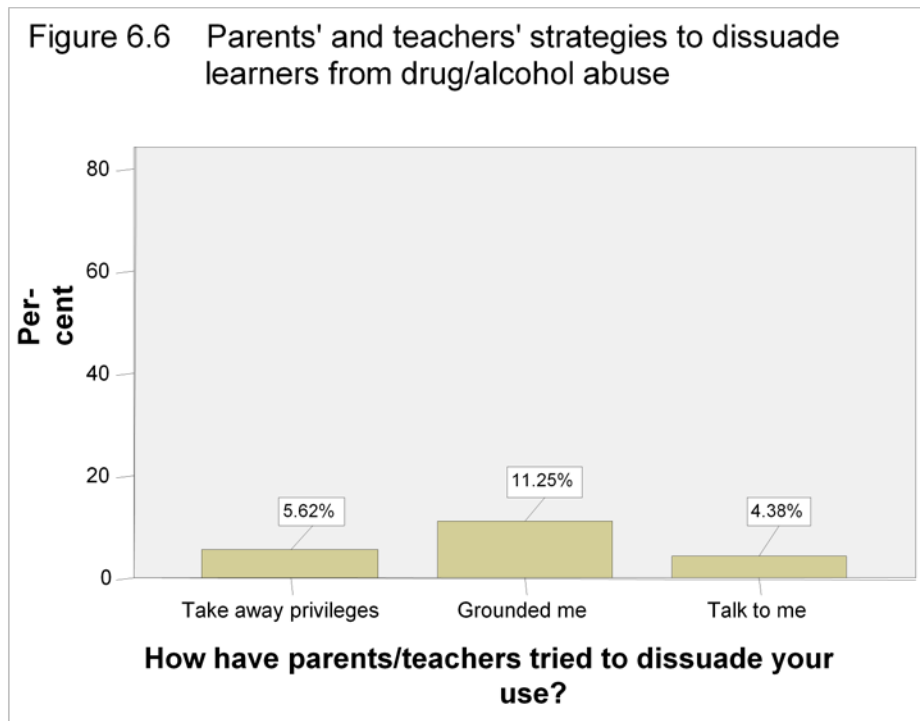


Figure 6.6 shows the strategies that parents/teachers use to try to dissuade learners from using drugs/alcohol. The learners indicated that the most popular strategy used by their parents/teachers is to 'ground' them (11.25%) or take away their privileges (5.62%).

f) Truancy

Table 6.12 Proportion of learners who *bunk* classes

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Do you ever <i>bunk</i> classes?	Yes	29	18.1
	No	131	81.9
	Total	160	100.0

Table 6.12 shows the proportion of learners who indicated that they have *bunked* classes. The majority (81.9%) of learners indicated that they have never *bunked*. Those who *bunk* classes do so at different frequencies. The range of frequency is reflected in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13 Frequency at which learners *bunk* classes

Characteristics		Frequency	%
How often do you <i>bunk</i> classes?	Once a week	5	3.1
	More than once a week	2	1.3
	If I don't like the teacher	4	2.5
	If the teacher is boring	1	0.6
	When I feel like it	18	11.3
	Not applicable (I do not <i>bunk</i> class)	127	79.4
	If the teacher is absent	3	1.9
	Total	160	100.0

Table 6.13 shows that the majority (79.4%) of learners do not *bunk* classes. Among those who do *bunk* classes, the majority (11.3%) claim they do so when they feel like it.

g) Learner absenteeism

Table 6.14 Learner absenteeism

Characteristics		Frequency	%
Are you absent from school regularly?	Yes	10	6.25
	No	150	93.75
Do you find there is a relation between your absenteeism and your academic performance?	Yes	34	21.25
	No	125	78.125
Have you ever dropped out of school?	Yes	5	3.125
	No	155	96.875

Table 6.14 shows that absenteeism and school drop-outs are not widespread among the learners.

h) Disruption of classes by learners

Table 6.15 Disruption of classes by learners

		Frequency	%	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	5.0	5.0	5.0
	No	152	95.0	95.0	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.15 shows that 95% of the learners indicated that they don't usually disrupt classes, while only 5% indicated that they do.

i) Cell phone usage during class

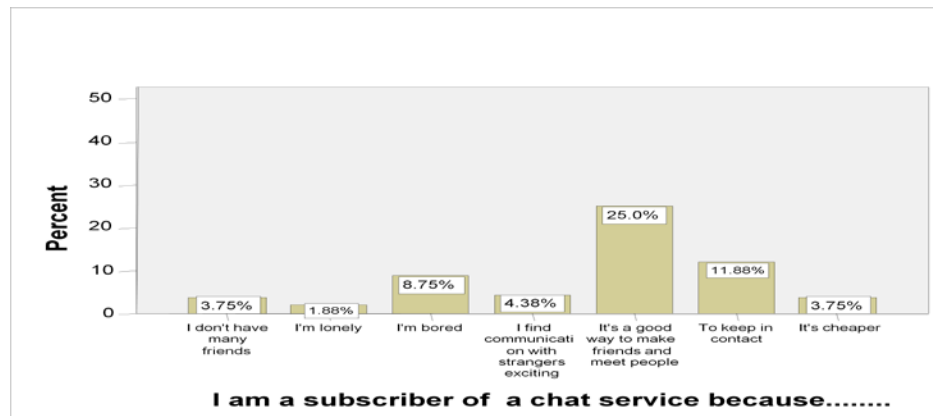
Table 6.16 Material possessions: cell phones

Characteristics			Do you take the cell phone to school?		Total
			Yes	No	
Do you own a cell phone?	Yes	Count	76	37	113
		(% within) Do you own cell phone?	67.257	32.743	100

	No	Count	3	44	47
		(% within) Do you own cell phone?	6.5217	93.478	100
Total		Count	79	81	160
		(% within) Do you own cell phone?	49.375	50.625	100

According to Table 6.16 the majority of learners indicated that they own cell phones, and 67.25% of those who own cell phones indicated that they take their cell phones to school.

Figure 6.7 Proportion of learners who are subscribed to chat services



As Figure 6.7 shows, a number of learners are connected to chat services via their cell phones. Reasons for this range from: it's a good way to make friends, they are bored, it is cheaper and it is a means of keeping contact.

j) Learners' attitudes towards moral principles

Table 6.17 Learners' attitudes towards moral principles

Learner attitudes regarding selected common moral principles in society, n=160

(SA= strongly agree; A= agree; D= disagree; SD= strongly disagree)

Characteristics	SA/A	Uncertain	D/SD	Total
I respect my body	92.50	6.88	0.63	100.00
I respect older people	91.25	8.75	0.00	100.00
I am ambitious and have dreams for the future	90.63	5.00	4.38	100.00
I respect my and other peoples' possessions	88.13	9.38	2.50	100.00
I believe in God	86.88	8.75	4.38	100.00
I work hard at school to make my dreams come true	83.13	15.63	1.25	100.00
My parents instill positive values in me	79.38	18.13	2.50	100.00
My parents give me enough attention and love	77.50	15.00	7.50	100.00
I believe that God holds me responsible for what I do with my life	76.88	14.38	8.75	100.00
I am generally an honest person	75.00	16.88	8.13	100.00
I try to live according to the values that I'm taught by my parents	73.13	13.13	13.75	100.00
My parents and teachers are good role models	71.25	22.50	6.25	100.00
I take pride in my school work	71.25	24.38	4.38	100.00
My friends understand me	70.63	20.00	9.38	100.00
I respect all people, irrespective of their age	70.63	21.88	7.50	100.00
Although I am still young, I make a positive contribution in my school or community	67.50	21.88	10.63	100.00
I always listen to my parents and teachers	65.00	27.50	7.50	100.00
I go to church often	55.00	16.25	28.75	100.00
I practice the values that are taught by my church	55.00	29.38	15.63	100.00
My parents are involved in my school work and school activities	53.75	21.88	24.38	100.00
I contribute to the welfare/well-being of others	53.13	31.88	15.00	100.00
My parents buy me everything I want	38.75	18.75	42.50	100.00
My parents do not understand me	36.88	28.13	35.00	100.00
I am obsessed with material possessions e.g. the latest fashions, gadgets like cell phones, play stations, jewellery	35.00	25.63	39.38	100.00
I sometimes do wrong things to spite my parents	34.38	18.75	46.88	100.00
My teachers do not understand me	31.88	38.75	29.38	100.00
I was approached by a classmate or friend who wanted us to cheat during a test or in the exams	30.00	11.88	58.13	100.00
I have cheated during a test or exams	27.50	15.00	57.50	100.00
I lie about my age to gain access to places of entertainment, e.g. nightclubs	20.00	9.38	70.63	100.00
I find school to be boring	18.75	22.50	58.75	100.00
If it were up to me, I would not attend school	14.38	11.88	73.75	100.00

I have tried to buy a test/exam paper from a teacher (or someone else)	10.63	5.00	84.38	100.00
I was approached by a friend or classmate who wanted us to buy a test/exam paper from a teacher (or someone else)	10.63	12.50	76.88	100.00
I disrupt classes because I'm usually bored in class	8.75	16.88	74.38	100.00
I have vandalized the school's (or other) property	8.13	10.00	81.88	100.00
I sell or have sold marijuana or other substances to my peers/classmates/friends	4.38	5.00	90.63	100.00

Table 6.17 shows the attitudes of learners regarding certain moral principles in the family and the wider society. More than 80% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they respect their bodies, older people, and the possessions of other people. They also believe in God, believe that God holds them responsible for how they live their lives, work hard at school to make their dreams come true, and take pride in their school work. The majority further indicated that they have parents who instill positive values in them and who pay adequate attention to them.

Furthermore, more than half of the learners believe that they are generally honest individuals. They indicated that they always listen to their parents and teachers, often go to church, and practice the values that are taught by their church. The majority indicated that they try to live according to the values that they are taught by their parents, and believe that their parents and teachers are good role models. The majority also indicated that although they are still young, they make positive contributions in their schools or communities. More than 70% of the sample believe that their friends understand them, and that they respect all people, irrespective of their age.

The literature indicates that the South African society is experiencing a moral decay, and that children especially, lack a positive value system. They use and abuse drugs, are undisciplined, engage in sexual and criminal activities, often from a young age, and are inconsiderate. These ills have a negative impact on society and on education. However, from the findings of the questionnaire it appears as if children are not involved in these moral ills, or at least only in some. One example where the findings in the questionnaire are consistent with the literature is the fact that learners who use

drugs/alcohol claim to be using them mostly when they are out with friends. This is a possible indication of how children succumb to peer pressure. Examples where the findings of the questionnaire are in contrast to the literature is that the majority of learners indicated in the questionnaire that they are not sexually active, that they do not commit crimes, that they respect themselves and others, that they value honesty, respect and hard work, and that they do not often *bunk* classes.

A possible explanation for these inconsistencies is that learners were not completely honest when they completed the questionnaires. It has been established by researchers that respondents often write down the answers to questions in accordance to what they know is the expected answer, although they were told beforehand to be as honest as possible. Adolescents and the youth are especially prone to this kind of behaviour. The researcher investigated this contradiction in the interviews with individual learners from the respondents who completed the questionnaires. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 24 learners to further investigate the attitude and behaviour patterns as expressed in the personal interviews.

6.3 ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with parents, principals, teachers, community leaders and Grade 11 learners. These participants were carefully selected to represent the different and important stakeholders in education.

There was good rapport between the researcher and the participants. During the interviews the researcher observed the participants' body language. Generally speaking, the participants were relaxed and comfortable during the interviews. The fact that the interviews were recorded did not in any way impact on the participants' responses. Also, the fact that they could respond in their home language might have contributed to the success of the interviews.

Some learners were nervous at first and were careful about their responses. The researcher attributed this to the fact that they were a little hesitant to divulge personal information. However, the researcher conducted individual interviews with learners who

did not want to 'open up' during the focus group interviews. The rest of the participants were eager to respond. Their responses support the fact that there exists a moral crisis, and that there is a lack of values in society. In contrast to the adult participants, children do not seem to think that the South African society needs moral revival. For them, that is how society is and how it should be. They see it as the changing times in which we are living. Their body language indicated that they do not have a problem with what they are doing. Some were laughing and boasting as they were describing their sexual activities, their views regarding moral principles, and their disrespect for their teachers and other adults. They did not even realize or care that they were expressing a total lack of positive values and an acceptable moral code.

6.3.1 Findings from the interviews with learners

After the questionnaires had been analyzed, interviews were conducted with 24 learners from the four selected schools to further probe the themes that emerged from the questionnaires. The researcher aimed to determine whether the answers as given in the questionnaires were answered honestly. The meaning and implication of some of the answers were not clear from the questionnaires, therefore these questions and answers were further addressed during the interviews. Some learners also chose not to respond to some of the questions in the questionnaires. These questions were explored during the interviews. The same themes that were used in the questionnaires were used to guide the interviews. *Verbatim* quotations are used to indicate the exact words of the learners.

a) Drug and alcohol abuse

The question that was asked was: "Do you drink, smoke or use other types of drugs?"

According to the analysis of the questionnaires, only a small percentage of the learners indicated that they have used drugs, whereas alcohol is used by 43.75%. During the interviews, a number of learners also indicated that they have used alcohol, and they

mostly used alcohol when they are with their friends. Some indicated that they have used drugs, but that they have stopped. When they were asked why they use alcohol, they claimed that it makes them feel good, and they want to be 'in'. Learners stated that they use the substances mainly on weekends, because *taverns* are open on weekends, and parties usually take place over weekends and when the schools are closed. Many learners claimed that 'times have changed' from the time their parents were young, meaning that substance abuse, especially alcohol and cigarette smoking, is now an everyday occurrence among children. The learners thus, according to the interviews, equate 'changing times' with drinking, smoking and being involved in sexual activities.

Learner 1: *"Most of my friends drink and smoke. We do it almost every weekend. It's just nice, plus there's nothing better to do. It's much nicer than to do homework, or to sit at home with my parents. Sometimes after drinking we end up having sex. My teachers also know I drink. Some of them drink with me."*

Learner 2: *"I drink because I like it, and because my friends drink. It makes me feel good, tipsy and relaxed. My parents know about my drinking. On two occasions I came home late and I was drunk. The following day I could not even go to church because I had babalas (a hangover). My mom took my cell phone away, and told me that I was never going out again, especially on weekends. She and my dad told me to stop drinking, but they don't know that I still do."*

Learner 3: *"My mother is not moving with the times. She wants to raise me the same way she was raised. She grew up in the sixties. We are now in 2008. Things have changed. Everyone drinks; it's not even unusual anymore. My dad knows I drink, but there's nothing he can do about it."*

These findings seem to indicate that learners do not respect their bodies, although, from the questionnaire findings, 92.5% of the learners indicated that they do. Again, it is possible that learners were not honest when they completed the questionnaires. Also, children seem to abandon going to church. However, they claim that they do believe in God and sometimes read their Bibles, even if they use drugs/alcohol, engage in pre-marital sexual activities and do not often go to church. This seems to support the argument emanating from the literature that often children know what is right, but that they choose to do the wrong thing, or to behave immorally.

b) Incidents of crime

The literature review revealed that crime in South Africa is escalating, especially among young people. However, according to the findings from the questionnaire 80% of the sample indicated that they do not commit crimes. Of those learners who indicated that they have committed crimes, stealing and vandalism, and a combination of these, were the most frequent, and 3.13% of the learners who indicated in the questionnaires that they have stolen, had stolen money. Rape and under-age drinking also occurred according to the analysis. The learners seem to be justifying their reasons for stealing, as can be seen by their responses.

On the question "Have you ever committed any crime, and why?" the following are some of the responses from the learners:

Learner 1: *"Not really...., no, nothing major. Taking a R50 from my mother's purse without her knowledge is not really a crime, is it? I mean, what am I going to buy booze with? Sometimes we meet guys who sponsor us, then we don't really need money, but sometimes guys can be very stingy."*

Learner 2: *“Sometimes my parents don’t want to give me or buy me something, so I steal money from them, but it’s usually not a lot. It’s really no big deal.”*

One learner indicated during an individual interview that he had forced himself on a girl once, and that he felt bad about it afterwards. He stated that he does not think the girl told anyone, and he also never told anyone. The boy felt, though, that it wasn’t rape, but he did mention that the girl did not really want to have sex with him.

Question: “So, how important are values to you, if you think stealing is okay?” “Do you value honesty and integrity, for example?”

Learner 3: *“I’m not saying its okay to steal; I just think it’s no big deal. What’s the point of asking my mom, because I know she’s not going to give it to me? If she found out, I would say I did not take it. She takes my things without telling or asking me.”*

Learner 4: *“I think everyone steals once in a while, and tell a white lie every now and then. I think I’m fairly honest, although I have cheated once or twice in a test, because I had not studied. I did not get caught.”*

These responses again support the notion of the loss of a value system in society, especially amongst adolescents. They do not seem to understand the meaning and implications of true honesty and integrity.

c) Involvement in physical and sexual activities/violence

According to the questionnaires, many learners had been involved in physical violence. The majority blame the fights on the other person. Some of the learners indicated they fight, especially when they are drunk.

“When you’re drunk, you don’t really know what you’re doing. It’s like the alcohol takes over.”

One learner indicated that he does not really drink, but that he thinks he has a temper. He also indicated that his mother and stepfather fight almost every weekend. During the interviews the learners were asked if they are sexually active. The questionnaire shows that the majority of learners became sexually active between the ages of 13 to 17. When asked why they became sexually active at such a young age, they claimed that it just happened. Some claim that they are in committed relationships, and that is what people do in relationships. Many of the girls indicated that they were pressured by the boys to engage in sex. The boys claimed that the girls wanted it. Most of the learners were honest and indicated that they are still sexually active. In contrast to the questionnaires, the majority of learners indicated during the interviews that they did not use protection the first time they had sex. The learners who are still sexually active indicated that sometimes they use protection, and sometimes they do not.

One **boy** stated: *“Well, we had been drinking, we went to my parents’ house (they were out), and one thing led to another. But the way she was dressed also told me that is what she wanted. And I was young; you know what young boys go through, hormones and all those things.”*

Another **learner** responded to the question by saying: *“I’ve been having sex since I was 14. I’m now 17, and I don’t really have a steady girlfriend. But I’m still sexually active. You know these days we don’t wait to be married to have sex, or wait for 18, or 21. But my parents don’t know that I’m not a virgin anymore; some of my friends know.”*

The learners were asked if they are aware of the dangers of having unprotected sex. Two girls indicated in the interviews that they had been pregnant and had abortions. During the individual interviews it also emerged that two other girls admitted to being HIV positive, and that they also knew who had infected them. Their attitude indicated

that this knowledge and behaviour is common among their friends. The learners claimed that their parents did not really give them sex education, and that they got the information at school, from the television and their friends.

This corresponds with the problem of children who engage in sexual activities (often unprotected) from a young age. Their sexual behaviour, as indicated from the literature, often leads to teenage pregnancies and the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. It also indicates how some parents fail to take the responsibility of instilling norms and values in their children.

Adolescents seem to withhold the fact they are sexually active from their parents, but they share this information with their friends.

d) Parents' awareness and attitude towards their children's use of drugs/alcohol

As indicated above, parents often neglect their task of imparting positive values in their children. Literature indicates that many parents leave this task to the school. The interview findings indicated that some parents and teachers are aware of children's use of drugs/alcohol, and that they sometimes do try to dissuade the children from using these substances. Parents use different methods to dissuade their children, e.g. they take away privileges like cell phones, or they refuse to buy their children certain things. However, it seems as if these methods or strategies are not very effective, as the learners claim that they still continue with their actions. It therefore seems as if, even though parents are trying to discipline and educate their children, their strategies are not effective. What also emerged from the interviews with learners is the fact that some teachers are not positive role models for children. Children indicated during the interviews that some teachers socialize and use alcohol with them. They claim that teachers often supply them with alcohol, especially in nightclubs, parties and *shebeens*. Thus, children do not seem to be getting the necessary guidance from teachers, as is also indicated in the literature.

e) **Learner behaviour in schools**

The literature review indicates that there is a moral crisis in the schools, and that there seems to be a breakdown in the culture of teaching and learning in many South African schools. Some responses from the learners supported the notion that there is a moral crisis in the schools, although some oppose the statement. For example, the questionnaire findings indicated that 81.9% of learners do not *bunk* classes, and that absenteeism is not widespread. This was supported by the learner responses from the interviews, during which most of the learners indicated that they seldom play truant. A few did indicate, however, that they sometimes do not go to school. They claim that they had valid reasons for being absent, for example, that the teachers and school are boring. The researcher found it perturbing that these respondents did not even realize the implication of what they were saying. It verified the fact that these adolescents had little sense of a positive value system, and that they don't value education. Analysis of the questionnaire also indicated that 18.75% of the learners strongly agreed that learners find school boring. The questionnaire answers indicated that 67% of learners have cell phones and take them to school, but what was not asked in the questionnaires is whether these learners use their cell phones during classes while the teachers were teaching. This was asked during the interviews, and it was found that the majority of learners claimed to have used their cell phones while the teachers were teaching. When asked why they used their cell phones during school hours, the most common responses were: "everyone does it", "they don't understand what the teachers are saying", and that "the teachers are boring". Many learners indicated during the interviews that they often disrupt classes by coming to school late, by being involved in arguments with their classmates and sometimes with teachers, and by using cell phones. These answers indicate that learners have little or no respect for their teachers. Some learners also indicated that they are sometimes involved in fights, often during break and after school, but seldom in the classrooms. Many learners reported that they often do not do homework, and that they borrow other learners' books to copy homework. These responses indicated a lack of diligence and ambition to perform well

at school. It is also clear that to these respondents, school and successful learning are not important.

In summary, from the questionnaire findings and the interviews conducted with learners it is clear that some of the responses are supported by the findings in the literature and some are in contrast with what the literature claims. The questionnaires indicated that there is a moral breakdown in society, but that this breakdown is not as bad as is stated in the literature. The interviews, however, seem to be supporting what the literature claims. Children seem to argue that we are living in modern times, and they equate these modern, changing times with drug/alcohol use and abuse, with being permissive, undisciplined and disrespectful, and with not living according to positive values. They often do not understand that their behaviour and attitude is dishonest and immoral.

6.3.2 Findings from the interviews with adult participants

The following themes emerged from the interviews with the parents, teachers, principals and community leaders:

a) a lack of values, especially among children, and how this loss of values causes a moral crisis in the South African society; b) the importance of values in education and in addressing the moral crisis in society; c) the lack of positive role models for children; d) the moral crisis in the schools; and e) the influence of Western culture on the education of African learners.

The responses from these participants in terms of these themes support, to a great extent, the information found in the literature review.

a) A lack of values in society and how it causes a moral crisis

What emerged from this theme is that the participants agreed that values play an important role in education and in developing children morally. Without values society cannot flourish. Participants also stated that even though values are important, children

especially, do not have a positive values system. Most participants agreed that a strict moral code and positive values are very important for the moral development of children and to make their communities better places. Participants felt that respect among children is lacking. Interestingly, the learners indicated that they respect adults, but that the adults do not understand or respect them.

Some of the principals' views about a lack of values are as follows:

Principal 1: *"Values are those things that we as parents teach our children, those things that my parents taught me, e.g. honesty, respect, responsibility, to love one another. Values teach you what's right and wrong."*

Principal 2: *"If you go into the community during school hours, you will see that some of the parents are drunk, as early as nine in the morning. And some children are absent from school, but you find them in the streets. If parents get drunk so early in the morning, what do you expect from kids? Parents must also respect their children. If the parents get drunk, so will their children. No wonder our communities are in such a mess. Unemployment is a major problem in our community. People drink because they don't have jobs; they are frustrated."*

Principal 3: *"I'd like to believe that I raised my own children according to good, traditional values. My children are grown-up and live on their own, one is studying. But they knew that if they did something wrong, they would have to bear the consequences. My wife and I also made sure that we spent quality time with our children. We all sat together and talked about the day - what went well and what didn't. I think this gave them a sense of belonging and being loved."*

Community leaders responded by saying:

Community leader 1: *“If you want to know about values, read your Bible. The Bible clearly tells us that we must respect our parents, and love our neighbours. But today, in many houses, children are the parents. The parents have to listen to the children because the children do just what they want. They don’t listen to anyone. I took my two children to live with my parents because they don’t listen to me and my wife. But my mother said they also don’t listen to her. I don’t know how and when they got like that.”*

Community leader 2: *“Yes, values are important. I grew up as a gang member, but now I follow God. Now that I’m an adult, I try to do the right thing, and I encourage my own children and the children in my community to do the right thing. This is the only way we can have a good society.”*

Parents shared the same sentiments:

Parent 1: *“One very important value is respect. My children don’t respect me. My oldest daughter is 16 years old, my son is 12. When I ask them to do something, they just say ‘do it yourself, or ‘I’ll do it later’. I found her smoking outside one day. She said that at least she was trying to hide it. She told me she did not want to go to school anymore because the teachers are boring, and she does not see why she has to go to school. ‘Two of my friends are working’, she said, ‘and they can buy everything they want’. The teachers also complain about her.”*

Parent 2: *“My children think that because I’m not educated, they don’t have to listen to me. I tell them, I’m still your mother, and I try to do the best I can. I want you to grow up to have better a life than I had. Your other brother is in prison for rape and robbery. Is this how and where you want to end up? Do you want to spend your adult life in prison like your brother?”*

Teachers stated:

Teacher 1: *“If I could get another job, I would take it. We get paid very little money, and we have to take other parents’ children’s nonsense. They (learners) come to school late, they don’t do their homework, they don’t listen to anyone. I don’t even want to mention the cell phones they bring to school. We’re not allowed to beat them. I just leave them to do what they like. If they want to smoke, let them smoke. I’m tired of talking. I’m here to teach. When I was in school, we respected our teachers. We were beaten, although we did not like it.”*

Teacher 2: *“We spend most of our time at school disciplining learners. Why don’t parents educate and discipline their children at home? I discipline my own children at home, because it is my duty, not the teacher’s duty. If I discipline learners my way, the parents will come and complain. If I don’t discipline them, the parents still come and complain. We don’t know what to do.”*

b) The importance of values in education in addressing the moral decay of society

The responses given for this theme correlate, to a great extent, with the responses given for the first theme. Participants felt that if children are not taught from a young age the difference between right and wrong, they will not grow up to be mature and responsible members of their communities (see Chapter 2). All the participants agreed that a value system should be laid at a young age. Most of them did not give a specific age as to when these values should be taught, but they all agreed that values education should take place before a child goes to pre-primary school. Participants also agreed that if children are taught values at a young age, they will internalize these values and learn to practice them. Participants, particularly teachers and principals, attribute the breakdown of society to a lack of values. Teachers and principals felt that parents are

not educating their children, and that this responsibility is left to the teachers. This statement is also supported in the literature which states that teachers often feel that parents are neglecting their parental task in educating their children. The teachers felt that they should not be the primary educators, the parents should be. Some parents stated that they at least try to educate their children, but admit they felt they were failing. This notion also correlates with the findings from the interviews with the parents. They admitted that they do not know what else to do hence they felt the teachers should step in.

The following are some of the responses that were made by the participants:

Principal 1: *“Our community is crime-ridden, this crime spills over into our schools. A few months ago some kids were fighting with weapons. The local newspaper published the incident. One journalist came to interview me. The people who bring these fights to the school are gang members. They want my learners to take part in criminal and illegal activities. When the learners refuse, they are victimized by these gangsters. The nearby shebeens also do not help. We have asked the police on numerous occasions to close down these shebeens. They would only be closed for a week or two, and open again.”*

The researcher asked a principal why he thought the *shebeen* owners opened their *shebeens* again, even after they had been instructed by the police to close them. His response was:

Principal 2: *“They (the owners) feel that selling alcohol puts bread on the table. Many parents in the community are unemployed, and the parents think the government is not doing enough to create jobs. The parents say they won’t have to sell liquor if they can find decent jobs.”*

Teachers also concede that children do not practice values.

Teacher 1: *“Some children are rude and disrespectful, although I have a number of good children in my class. We should not blame the learners; the parents are the problem. I’ve heard how some children talk to their parents – in a very disrespectful manner, as if they are talking to their friends.”*

Teacher 2: *“When I was growing up, every adult member of the community was my parent. We were raised by the entire community. The children of today don’t even listen to their own parents, how are they going to listen to other people? Some of our children go to Model C schools. When they are at these schools, they are influenced by the Western society. They tend to forget their roots. But we send them to these schools because we want them to receive the best education.”*

Parents shared the same sentiment about their children’s abuse of alcohol, especially during weekends, how the children sometimes disappeared for an entire weekend and only went back home on Mondays after school. Many parents are afraid of their children because they claim the children become violent and demanding when they are intoxicated. Some parents reported that they have had to call the police on numerous occasions to have their children locked up. Some also felt that the Government is not doing enough to address issues of crime, social services and unemployment. Others felt the Government is not responsible for educating their children, the parents are.

Parent 1: *“My daughter was 12 years old when she started smoking dagga and started drinking. She’s now 16 and she still drinks and smokes. She’s in Grade 9; she should have been in Grade 11. She bunks school regularly. Her teachers call me to school almost every week because sometimes she goes to school smelling of dagga. I don’t know why she does it. I think it started when I married her stepfather. Last month she wanted to stab my dad because he wouldn’t give her money for liquor and dagga. I was heartbroken. She’s always in and out of*

rehabilitation. I have two younger children that I'm also raising. I cannot remember how many times she has stolen money and other things from the house. This is not how I raised her."

Parent 2: *"Our community is in such a mess because children do what they want to. When we were young we used to listen to older people – these days children don't. That's the problem. Also, if we can all just learn to love and accept one another, and respect one another, show ubuntu, not do crime, and speak to others in a proper manner. I really think practicing these values can bring us together. It's really not that difficult. It can be done. But it starts with the parents, with all parents."*

c) The lack of positive role models for children

This objective is directly related to the second one, and some of the responses in the second objective also address objective three. Participants felt that the society is in decay because children, especially, lack values. Parents, principals and teachers mostly agreed that parents are not good role models for their children. The parents claimed that they try to be good role models to their children, but that their children are disrespectful, stubborn, undisciplined and disobedient. This notion is supported by the literature findings. Many parents complained that their children used to listen to them when they were young, but their behaviour started to change once they became teenagers. The majority of the participants ascribed this to peer pressure, the media, and to the fact that many children forget their values as soon as they grow up.

As found in the literature, all the participants agreed that parents should be primarily responsible for instilling values in their children, but that it is not easy to raise children. They claimed that children are not supposed to be raised by schools in school, but by parents. Most of the participants (teachers, community leaders and principals) are parents themselves, and they all felt that as parents, it was their duty to raise and educate their children.

One **teacher** puts it as follows:

“I’m a teacher and a mother, and it’s difficult for me to separate the two. I understand the teachers’ points of view, but I also understand that as a mother, it’s difficult to raise children these days. Parents who are not teachers often don’t know how difficult it is for teachers. They think a teacher’s job is easy. They think we go home at two or three, and we get four holidays a year.”

Another **teacher** claimed:

“Parents want to make their children our problem. I’ve got children of my own, and I don’t make them someone else’s problem. I know my children are first of all my responsibility, and secondly, they are the teachers’ responsibility. But these children in our school, some of their parents don’t care about them or their school work. You invite parents to come to school, but you will find that only a few come. Their reasons for not attending school activities are always that they are busy. No wonder these learners sometimes act out. Yes, as teachers we need to educate. It’s part of being a teacher, but what do the parents do?”

In one school the principal stated that a large number of learners from his school are raised by extended family members, and not by the parents. This is because many parents work outside East London, and sometimes only see their children once or twice a year.

Principal 1: *“Many children are being raised by aunts, sisters or grandparents. In some households there are not even any grown-ups at all. The children are left to fend for themselves. It’s very difficult for these kids. Sometimes the grandparents are old and cannot read or write. There’s no one to see that these learners do their homework, no one comes when we*

have meetings at school. No one is involved in their school activities. No one knows whether they actually come to school or not.”

Another **principal** responded: *“Many parents have to work. I understand that, I have to work too. So in many homes there’s no one in the afternoons when kids come from school, no adult supervision. And the problem is, many parents try to compensate for not being there. They buy their kids expensive cell phones and clothes, give them money, and all those things. I think that’s the wrong thing to do, but parents do this because they feel guilty. Material possessions are not going to compensate for attention, time and love. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying these parents don’t love their kids, I just think they need to compensate in another ways.”*

Community leaders felt that the Government does not do enough for the development of the youth. They felt the Government has to build more sport centers, and other places where the youth can partake in positive recreational activities.

Community leader 1: *“These young kids have too much leisure time, and they don’t know what to do with their time. They go to nightclubs, parties and shebeens. But on Sundays you will see only a few of them in church. Some parents really try to discipline and educate their children, but the temptations and peer pressure are too big. I sometimes feel I can lock my children in the house until they are 21, but it’s impossible. As a parent, a teacher, and community leader, I encourage them to contribute positively to their communities. But there’s only so much we can do. You can take a horse to the river, but if it doesn’t want to drink.....”*

Another community leader is of the opinion that the Government should not be blamed for all the problems, but that the community should be held responsible.

Community leader 2: *“Look at the parks that were build; who vandalized them? It’s not the Government, it’s our own children. Only two years ago a new tennis court was built; no one ever goes there to play. They (the youth) would rather go and drink, and take drugs. The shebeens are full of young children. Where are the parents? Why do they allow their children to go to places like shebeens? It’s not the Government’s fault, or the teachers’ fault. I blame the parents. Teach the children from a young age to go to church, to do what’s right, and keep telling them, but also keep showing them.”*

Parent 1: *“I teach my children values. I teach them to treat other people the way they want to be treated. I teach them what is right and what is wrong, the same way my parents taught me. But times are different now. There are drugs available, children have sex at young ages. I tell my children about HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies. I also tell them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. The problem is, once they leave the house, you don’t know what they do. You can only hope and pray they’ll be safe, and that they will remember what you taught them. I also try to spend time with my children, but sometimes I can’t, because I have to work. I’m a single mother. Their father left when the children were small.”*

Parent 2: *“Of course it is the parents’ duty to teach and educate their children. A community without values is no good. And who makes the community? We do. It would be so much easier if all parents could teach their children the same things. We would have less crime and these other things that are going on, for example, children watching pornography, and having sex, and drinking too much. My next door neighbour drinks and smokes with his children, and they are only teenagers. Now my children come home and tell me that so-and-so drinks with his own kids, why can’t*

they drink with me? Do you see what I mean? I tell them, ‘You don’t live with so-and-so, you live with me.’

Parent 3: *“Teachers are our children’s parents while they are at school. I’m not saying they should raise my children. Of course I have to raise my own children, but teachers should educate them. I know it’s difficult for teachers, but they should try. I don’t mind if a teacher punishes my child for doing something wrong. I also punish and discipline them. But I also know today’s children are very stubborn. They think they know everything. They’ve got answers for everything. When my children were young it was better, but now that they are teenagers, they think they’re grown-up. They stopped listening to me and their father.”*

Parent 4: *“Educating children is the responsibility of the entire community. I don’t have a problem if my neighbour educates my children. I tell my children to listen to other grown-ups. Most people know what’s right and wrong. The church is also there to teach us about values, but it seems as if these kids hear something with the one ear, and it goes out the other.”*

d) The moral crisis in schools

Most participants agree that the culture of teaching and learning is lacking in schools, as is also confirmed by the literature findings. This is evident in the above responses made by some of the participants. They also agreed that this moral crisis in the schools is a clear indication of the moral crisis that is experienced by society. When the moral fiber of a society is damaged, it is not easy for schools to escape, because schools are part of society. What was also found during the interviews is that parents blame, at least partly, teachers for this moral dilemma in the schools. Parents and community leaders felt that teachers are not good role models and that they do not impart positive values in their learners. During the interviews some children claimed that they meet teachers in nightclubs, and that teachers often drank alcohol with them. In some communities

parents reported that teachers even made use of children to sell drugs or stolen goods for them, often on the school premises.

This indicates that teachers are, to an extent, also responsible for the lack of a culture of teaching and learning in the schools, as well as for the moral decay of society and in schools (see Chapter 3). Although all the participants agreed that values are important and that the schools should teach them, they confessed that they do not know how teachers can create a balance, especially in multicultural schools.

One **parent** summarized the moral crisis in schools as follow: *“My child says his teacher often comes late to school, sometimes he is drunk. He does not even try to hide it. How is a drunken teacher going to teach? These teachers are very corrupt. I want to take my child to a white school. At least I think he’ll get a better education there. I don’t want a teacher who is drunk to teach my child.”*

e) The influence of the Western culture on the education of African learners

Many parents in African communities felt that, although they want to give their children a good education, they are not sure whether sending them to former Model C schools was a good thing. These parents felt strongly that their children become and act ‘too White’ when they are at these schools – that they forget their roots. Despite this sentiment, African parents wanted their children to be exposed to other cultures, because they felt it ‘opens opportunities’ for their children. Some African parents even felt that their children were ashamed of their homes and communities when they interact too often with White learners. The parents felt that schools in the previously disadvantaged communities are not good schools, and that their children would not get a proper education in these schools.

It is indicated in the literature that multicultural education has been a huge challenge for teachers in South Africa. Teachers often do not know how to manage multicultural classes as far as values education is concerned, the reason being that value systems of

the Western and African cultures sometimes differ. The following examples illustrate some of these presumed differences:

- a) In the Western culture, punctuality is very important, whereas in African cultures it is not.
- b) Westerners seem to place emphasis on individualism, whereas Africans place more emphasis on communalism.
- c) Africans usually do not display affection in public, while Westerners are usually more openly affectionate in public.
- d) Even though both cultures regard respect as important, they have different ways of showing it. Usually in African culture eye contact or lack thereof indicates respect or disrespect. People who enjoy equal social standing are allowed to make eye contact, but a person of a lower social standing would be showing disrespect if he/she made eye contact with a person of a higher standing or who is regarded as his/her superior. In Western culture eye contact does not necessarily indicate lack of respect.

Some African parents also echoed that in former Model C schools the curriculum is still 'White', and their children are taught too many 'White values', while African values are neglected. White parents did not have much to say about the fact that their children attend school with African learners. White parents mentioned during the interviews that children from all cultures should be treated equally by the teachers. Some Afrikaans-speaking White parents feared, though, that Afrikaans is losing its identity in schools, because too many schools now opt for English as medium of instruction. White parents claim that they want their children to learn more about and be exposed to other cultures and values, even if these differ from their own.

6.3.3 Linking the themes to the objectives of the research

By means of the literature review it was indicated that the South African society is in a moral crisis, and that there is a decline in the practicing of sound moral values, especially among children. The analysis of the questionnaire also revealed that children

are involved in a number of moral ills namely drug and alcohol abuse, committing crime, and in sexual activities. However, it appears from analysis of the questionnaires that the moral crisis is not as significant as is claimed in the literature. In the interviews with parents and other participants it was indicated that the moral crisis is something to be concerned about.

The objectives, as mentioned in Chapters 1 of the study were addressed in the literature research. In the light of these objectives, certain themes were identified during the interviews with the participants.

Many participants could not give a precise definition of values, but they all agreed that values play an important role in the moral development of people and societies. They stated that a lack of values is what causes the unhealthy and polluted societies, and that society can be reclaimed by doing what is right and good. The problem seems to be that there are not sufficient role models to guide children towards responsible adulthood. As discovered through the interviews, adults do try to educate and discipline their children, but the children do not listen. Many parents try to be positive role models and instill positive values in their children, but the children do not pay attention to them. Teachers and community leaders also felt that children want to do what they like and they defy authority. Teachers accuse parents of failing to educate their children. Parents agree, because they claim their children do not listen to them, and they don't know how to discipline them. On the other hand, parents also blame teachers for not being good role models.

What all participants agreed on was that children need to be taught values, and that values education should start at home and be continued at school. However, the participants seemed not to know how parents and teachers should be equipped with the skills to teach values. The fact that values education does not seem to be effective, indicates that parents, teachers and community/religious leaders need to be empowered to teach values. While many parents felt that they only need to do what their parents did, other parents felt that they need to try new methods. Parents thought that their source of values, the Bible, is what should guide them. They claimed, however,

that what worked thirty or forty years ago, seems not to be working now. All the adult participants agreed, though, that raising children is a difficult job and that it does not come with a manual and/or instructions. What they stated was that it would help if all members of society have a common goal. This is how two participants summarized the issue of raising children and of imparting values to children:

Parent: *“Raising children is not easy, and it doesn’t come with a manual. I really wish it did come with instructions. But my children turned out okay. I think it’s because my husband and I were always involved in their lives. You cannot go to a school and be taught how to raise children. I wish we could. But you just have to go with your gut feeling. It’s all about values.”*

Principal: *“I think what needs to happen is for parents, teachers and pastors to stand together. The problem is that parents sometimes differ in the way they raise their kids. What is the school supposed to do? We have rules at school, and it doesn’t matter where you come from, or who your parents are, all learners must obey the rules. But there are rules at their homes too.”*

6.4 CONCLUSIONS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

In this chapter the findings emanating from the questionnaires and the interviews were presented, and these were compared with the findings in the literature. The findings from the questionnaires differed somewhat from the findings in the literature. Based on the literature study the researcher entered the field with pre-conceived ideas regarding the moral decay of the South African society. These ideas suggest that the South African society is in a moral crisis, mainly because of a lack of values, especially among children. The findings from the questionnaires were thus surprising, because they generally indicated that children do have values, and practice them. On the other hand, during the interviews it was found that there indeed exists a lack of values in children. The interviews with the adult participants strongly supported what the literature claims about the moral decay and the lack of values in society.

The next chapter will give a summary of the research findings. Conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made to make our society healthier, and to improve school practices.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been established in this research that the moral disintegration of our society has numerous socio-educational implications, amongst others, the absence of consideration for fellow human beings, the high crime rate, promiscuity, moral and sexual licentiousness which results in the escalation of HIV/AIDS, as well as unwanted teenage pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse, ill-behaved and undisciplined children, and the lack of a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

The most important factor that gave rise to this study is the fact that these social evils seem to be increasing in the broader society and in the schools. The result is an unstable, unsafe, lawless and unhealthy society, as is constantly reported in the media. Solutions need to be found urgently if we as South Africans want to reclaim our society and our schools.

The previous chapter gave a presentation and analysis of the findings of the empirical study. The aim of this chapter is to present a summary of the study and of the findings. Conclusions will also be drawn between the findings in the literature study and those in the qualitative research. Based on these findings, recommendations will be made to improve our society and our schools.

7.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The following aspects were explicated in *Chapter one*: the problem statement, the primary research question, the secondary research questions, the aim and objectives of the research, the research designs and the research methods. A demarcation of the research area, the limitations of the study, the key concepts to be used in the study, the research programme and the motivation, value and relevance of the study were also presented.

In *Chapter two* the concepts values and morality were discussed, as well as the importance of moral development for well-functioning societies and schools. Whilst a detailed definition of the concept values was given, related concepts such as religion, morality, and a life- and worldview were also defined and discussed. The researcher investigated the origin of the concept values, and the role that values play in society. In addition, the importance of a positive moral development for society was discussed. In this chapter it was stated that without positive moral development, societies cannot flourish.

Chapter three explored the moral degeneration of the present-day South African society. The literature findings indicate that the South African society is experiencing a moral dilemma, and that this dilemma has negative implications for the society and for education. Some of the implications are, for instance, an increase in the crime rate and in HIV/AIDS infections, the emphasis placed by people on their own selfish desires, an increase in the abuse of substances, a seemingly collapsing education system, and a lack of a culture of teaching and learning in schools.

Because of this moral decay, the society needs to be socially and morally reconstructed, with the view of creating a healthy and stable society and schools. According to the literature this moral reconstruction can be achieved by instilling positive values in children, but also if adults, and children, practice these values in their every day lives.

In *Chapter four* it was reported that the task of providing moral education must be carried out jointly by the parental home, the school, the state and the church. The mutual and participatory relationships between these societal structures and their relation to education were also discussed.

In *Chapter five* the research designs and research methods were discussed, and the rationale for selecting the qualitative research method, the grounded theory and ethnography. The methods to be employed to collect data were described, and the manner in which the data were to be analyzed.

Chapter six discussed the analysis and presentation of the data. The research was done empirically by means of questionnaires and interviews. The literature review of chapters two to four were used as a basis for analyzing the data from the empirical research. The findings from the empirical research, which were presented according to themes that emerged, were compared to the findings from the literature in order to ascertain the differences and similarities. These differences and similarities are presented in table form below (see Table 5.7). For the empirical research it was important that the findings from both the questionnaires and interviews be indicated, as there were differences in these findings. As stated in Chapter 6, some of the findings from the questionnaires were similar to those found in the literature and in the interviews, but the information from the questionnaires mostly seemed to contradict the literature findings. The findings from the interviews, however, corresponded to a great extent with the findings from the literature.

Chapter seven presents the summary, conclusions drawn from the research project and recommendations of the research.

Table 7.1 A comparison of the findings from the literature study and the empirical research

Findings from the literature	Findings from the empirical research
a) The South African society is experiencing a moral crisis, which is evident in schools and communities around the country. This moral crisis has negative implications for schools and the society, amongst others the lack of discipline in children and an increase in crime and substance abuse, especially among young people.	a) The analysis of the questionnaires indicated that learners feel that the social ills are not out of control. Even when the children were interviewed, they still seemed to think that the issue of the moral crisis is blown out of proportion. During the interviews they openly admitted that they use drugs/alcohol, engage in pre-marital, often unprotected sex, are ill-mannered, and they approve of negative values like dishonesty and disrespect. But they did not think that their behaviour and actions were immoral. Adult participants, however, acknowledged that there is a moral crisis in our society.

<p>b) These social ills, which can be seen in schools and in the wider society, are regularly reported by the media. Teachers often complain of unruly, undisciplined, disrespectful and disobedient learners. There is a lack of a culture of teaching and learning in many schools. Children bully one another in schools, carry weapons to school, sell drugs and alcohol, and use their cell phones to communicate via chat services such as MXit.</p> <p>c) The moral crisis is attributed to a lack of values in children and adults. In the literature it was found that parents often neglect their educational task, and expect the school to educate their children. Children are increasingly failing to live according to positive values like <i>ubuntu</i>, a positive attitude towards authority, altruism and mutual respect.</p> <p>d) In order to address this value crisis, South Africans need to practice values that will promote nation-building, safe and stable schools and societies, and a sense of pride in themselves and their country. Values thus play an important role in education, and especially in moral education, whether it is school-typical education or education at home.</p>	<p>b) Teachers, parents and community leaders complained of undisciplined children and children who lack social and moral responsibility. The teachers reported that they spend much time, which is allocated for teaching, to discipline learners. Valuable teaching time is lost in the process. Because of these problems, teachers reported that they do not enjoy being teachers any more, and would quit teaching if they could.</p> <p>c) The findings indicate that teachers hold the parents responsible for their children's lack of a value system. Parents themselves agreed that they have failed in their educational task and that their children seem not to practice positive values.</p> <p>d) All the participants, except the learners, generally agreed that in order to reclaim and restore our society, we need to focus on and live according to positive values. They agreed that without values education, we cannot have united and safe societies and schools.</p>
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<p>e) These values need to be instilled in learners by parents, teachers, the state and the church, although the church and the state are only indirectly involved with education. In order to produce morally mature citizens, these societal institutions should work together for the provision of moral education. Legislation also emphasizes co-operation and the involvement of parents and communities in school-typical education.</p>	<p>e) The findings indicated that parents should be mainly responsible for instilling values in their children, but that teachers also have a responsibility in this regard. The role of the state and the church was not discussed in detail during the interviews. However, the community leaders and the children themselves reported that children often go to nightclubs and other places of drinking, but fail to attend church or involve themselves in projects that can uplift their communities – places where they can be taught about morality and morals.</p>
<p>f) Although values education should be provided primarily by parents, the literature stated that parents often neglect this important task. A number of reasons can be the cause of this parental neglect, amongst others role differentiation and role uncertainty, and emotional vulnerability that many families experience.</p>	<p>f) Parents claimed that they are not neglecting their responsibility, but they do not know what to do anymore. The interviews indicated that many parents are aware of their children's immoral behaviour, but they do not know how to successfully dissuade learners from engaging in these immoral and often fatal acts.</p>

From the literature study it seems that the South African society, which includes the schools, is experiencing a moral crisis. There are numerous reasons for this moral dilemma, but there exists agreement that the lack of values in society, especially as far as children are concerned, is the most apparent reason. Many children do not have a proper value system because they lack positive moral guidance from adults, in particular from parents and teachers. Although the responses in the questionnaires seemed to contradict the literature findings, the information from the interviews, however, corresponded with the findings from the literature. The following conclusions

are reached from the comparison between the literature findings and the qualitative research:

- The South African society and schools are experiencing a moral and social crisis. This crisis is evident in the social ills that are experienced on a daily basis.
- The literature and interview findings acknowledge the moral decay of society, and attribute it to a lack of a value system. The moral crisis in schools manifests itself in the form of vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse, the absence of a work ethic among learners and educators, and crimes committed by learners at school.
- De Klerk & Rens (2003:353) profess that “there is an urgent need to establish ways of finding answers to the value crisis in South Africa.” This sentiment was also voiced by the adult participants, although some learners seemed to disagree with the notion that we are experiencing a value crisis.
- Many social ills, for example drug/alcohol abuse, crime, HIV/AIDS, and the practicing of negative values such as dishonesty, seem to be prevalent among children. However, the interviews with the learners indicated that they do not see their (immoral) behaviour as unacceptable, wrong, or out of the ordinary. They see their behaviour, as well as the immoral behaviour of adults, as characteristic of the modern times. Many learners claimed during the interviews that they drink, use drugs and have pre-marital sex because ‘everyone else does it’. Therefore, they disagree that the South African society is in decay. It is clear that the adolescents do not realize that ‘the way of life’ that they accept as normal is immoral and typical of the loss of a positive value system. The adult participants who were interviewed agreed about the moral crisis, are concerned about it and eager that solutions be found.
- What was apparent from the interviews is the fact that many adults claim to try to be good role models for their children, and to impart to them values that they think are worth living by, but, despite this, the children still seem to do what they like. The adolescents do not want to listen to adults, whether these adults are parents, teachers, or other community leaders. On the other hand, one has to

consider the possibility that these adults – mainly parents – have not been adequately involved in their children's moral, emotional and intellectual development during their early childhood. This could be the reason why they do not have much influence on their behaviour in the adolescent years. The mindset of children needs to be changed so that they can become morally clear-sighted and responsible. They need to be convinced to change their behaviour – this will have to be done by their educators. If this is not done, the society will continue to experience the moral crisis.

7.3 DEGREE TO WHICH THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH HAVE BEEN MET

The main aim of this research was to establish the nature and extent of the decay of morals and values in the South African society, and the role of values education in addressing this decay. The research findings and their interpretation have offered useful and meaningful insights to determine the degree to which the society is in decay, and have indicated the role of values education in addressing this decay.

The degree to which the aims of the research have been met will be discussed next. The aims are to:

- **define the concept values and to determine the role they play in the moral development of children towards responsible adulthood**

The concept values and its origin were extensively defined in the chapters on the literature review. An explanation was also given to illustrate that although all people have values, and therefore a value system, not all people consider the same values as equally important. Also, there are values that are universal, and some values only apply to certain communities and/or societies. But whether values are universal or not, the literature illustrated the important role they play in education and in society, and in the moral development of children on their path to responsible adulthood. Values and education are inseparable, and morality has always been and will always be part of education (De Klerk & Rens 2003:353).

- **investigate whether a lack of values contributes to the moral decay of a society**

The literature and the qualitative research revealed that the moral decay in South Africa is caused by a lack of a positive value system. This lack of values also contributes to the inadequate normative development of children. The research indicated that many parents are not good role models. Some parents abuse substances and their children copy their behaviour. People increasingly fail to live in accordance with values such as respect, honesty, accepting one another, and accountability. This causes them to be selfish, inconsiderate, irresponsible and dishonest. Because of these negative values they live immoral lifestyles, commit crimes, abuse their bodies, and disrespect others. Negative values seem to prevail over positive values, and are the cause of the moral degeneration of society.

- **determine whether the teaching of values at school and in the family will have an influence on the moral development of children and eventually improve the moral fiber of a society**

The fact that the South African society is experiencing a value dilemma because people are not practicing positive values, suggests that living according to positive values could improve the moral crisis. The literature review of this study, as well as the qualitative research suggests that what is currently lacking among South Africans is a proper value system which should be instilled in the home, but also at school, in the society and by the church. During the interviews participants stated that because of this lack of values, it is impossible to have a healthy and stable society and safe schools with well-disciplined learners. Values are important because they give guidelines on how people should behave. Because people/communities, however, sometimes have conflicting values, it is not easy to determine by whose values a certain society should live (Rens *et al* 2005:215). Although the Constitution of South Africa of 1996 promotes certain values that citizens should live by, these are not the only values that are important and that should guide citizens in their behaviour, choices and actions. Values like altruism,

honesty and responsibility, for instance, are regarded as positive values to live by, as was explained in Chapter 2 of this study.

- **explore how teachers and parents can be equipped with the skills to teach children about values**

If parents and schools are supposed to instill values in children, they need to be provided with the skills to do so. The literature states that the teachers' responsibility is two-fold: to teach the content of their learning area, and also to educate children about values and morality. At tertiary institutions students are empowered with the skills to teach, but should also be taught how to provide moral education. However, it has been stated in the literature that the multicultural nature of South African schools makes the task of teachers to educate very difficult. Teachers are confronted with integrated classrooms where there are learners from different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds. They often find it difficult to know what values they should teach without alienating or marginalizing certain cultures. The literature indicates that values education should start as early as possible, preferably before the child goes to pre-primary school; that parents and teachers should be consistent when instilling values; that they should be positive role models for their children; and that they must lead exemplary lives. The findings of the qualitative study support the notion that moral education should start early and that children need good role models. It is clear from the interviews with the parents and teachers that they need specific guidance in the task of imparting values to children. The manner in which such support programmes are devised and conveyed to parents and teachers is an important issue for further research.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from this research, specifically the literature review and the qualitative research, that the South African society is experiencing a severe moral crisis. This is obvious from the prioritizing of values by people in the society. Very often people,

especially children, prioritize negative values like disrespect, selfishness, cruelty, disobedience and dishonesty. Values to create a healthy and well-functioning society are not being practiced. When societies are malfunctioning and not united, it will be evident in schools as well, because, as has been stated in the literature, schools cannot escape the moral ills of the communities in which they are situated. What is needed is for the South African society to be morally and socially transformed or reconstructed. Social reconstructivism is crucial for the South African society and is the theoretical framework upon which this study is based.

The RNCS (2002:4) promotes a vision of a prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens who lead productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice. If South Africans can live according to the positive values that have been emphasized in the literature and in the qualitative research, the society will be largely improved. The study does not claim that nothing good and positive is happening in South Africa and in the schools. Nor does it claim that all people are morally corrupt and that all children lack a positive value system. Many people are respectful, honest, caring, empathetic and helpful, and try to make a positive contribution in the country. But despite this, the findings of this study indicate that the moral crisis in this country and in the schools may not be ignored, and needs to be addressed.

The findings from the literature and the qualitative research have been integrated and used to develop holistic and practical guidelines in an effort to improve the current situation in the South African society and schools.

7.4.1 Guidelines for transforming the moral fiber of society and of schools

The aim of this study was to find ways to improve a morally degenerated society, but also to find the means to improve school practices. The guidelines that are developed will thus focus on an attempt to create a well-functioning society, including the schools,

through the provision of values education at home, at school and in the broader community.

7.4.1.1 The parents' responsibility in imparting values to children

The social and moral challenges South Africa is faced with are not going to be overcome overnight, but change is possible. The findings revealed that transformation and moral regeneration need to start within the families. If parents can instill positive values in their children, and if children can live in accordance with these values, the crime rate and the rate at which HIV/AIDS and other STIs is spreading, would probably not be as high; children would realize the value of schooling; they would likely be less materialistic; and they would respect and value other people and their possessions. If we can start the improvement process with the youngsters of today, we may have a different country a few years from now. The findings from the literature and the interviews reveal that the youth do not realize that the country is experiencing a moral crisis. The challenging task is for parents and the members of society to make the young people aware of the fact that the society needs to be reconstructed in order to transform its moral fiber. If children do not realize and admit that the country is breaking down morally, it is unlikely that they will contribute to the moral transformation process.

The home is the first and best place where morality can be taught. The family is the primary and most influential group in which a child can learn how to socialize, how to love, to give, to trust. Parents should stop shifting the responsibility of imparting values on to the school or other structures. The responsibility primarily lies with them, although the role of the school and other societal structures cannot be denied. This is not easy when children are older, because they become more independent, they are curious and want to experiment with substances, and sometimes they are even rebellious; older children also tend to spend more time with friends and peers than they do with their parents. But even if children spend more time with their friends outside the home, they still need to know that their parents care, love, trust and treasure them. It is inevitable that some adolescents will, at some point, experiment with sex and substances. The

duty and responsibility of parents is to educate, inform and warn children about the dangers of unprotected sex and of substance abuse.

The social and communal environment in which post-modern people find themselves is characterized by extensive social, economic and technological changes. These changes have far-reaching implications, not only for the structure of society as a whole, but also for the stability and the internal dynamics of the family. As was revealed in the literature, many parents do not spend enough time with their children, usually because of work commitments, or often because parents are divorced. The high divorce rate in South Africa results in many children who find themselves in single parent households. The result is that parents try to over-compensate by purchasing material possessions such as cell phones, expensive clothes, play stations, etc., because they are plagued by feelings of guilt. There is no question that material possessions are essential, but acquiring them should not mean that values have to be compromised.

Also, because many parents have to work in cities other than where their homes are, many children are left to their own devices. Often there is no one to encourage, discipline or motivate them. Many children spend their time playing computer games or watching television. They also often listen to music that promotes sex, violence and the use of substances. There is a decrease in quality time families spend together.

The media plays a significant role in any society, but the negative influence it sometimes has on young, maturing children cannot be denied. Young children are often exposed to programmes on television which are meant for adults. Parents should, as far as possible limit, supervise and monitor the amount of time children, especially the young ones, spend watching television. The television often replaces the parent as an educator. Many family functions and responsibilities are thus disappearing. Young children often mimic what they see on television, or what they read in magazines. They experiment with sex and drugs or behave violently because of what they see on TV, and also as a result of the type of music they listen to. Their value systems become confused. Parents need to realize that they are the primary educators of their children, and that being exposed to too much television will impact negatively on children.

Parents have to act as mediators between their children and the corrupt post-modern world.

In many homes there is often no adult supervision. There is nobody who monitors whether children do their homework, or what they are doing when they are at home alone. Some children live without any adults, many live with grandparents. Sometimes their parents live and work in other cities, and only see the children over weekends. Another reality is that many children, especially in African families, are orphans who have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS. These children are left in the care of grandparents who, as the children's guardians, have to impart values to them. The problem, however, is that many of these grandparents are too old to care for children, or they are ill.

Some children have no parents, grandparents or relatives to look after them. Children need a positive influence, emotional support, and discipline. If they have no parents or other relatives, the community, school and the church will have to offer assistance. All children, as stipulated in the South African Constitution of 1996, have the right to appropriate care, even if, for whatever reasons, they are removed from the family environment (see Chapter 3). As the primary educators and caregivers, the parents are responsible to cater for the basic needs of their children. There is a relation between the degree to which these needs are met and how a child will behave: if children feel that they are not loved, it is unlikely that they will love others.

Children feel safe in a structured, orderly environment where set rules are maintained and parents act consistently. The more secure a child feels, the more he/she will be inclined to explore the world and to obey rules. It is important for parents to realize that children need authority, which is a pre-condition for education. Children who grow up without authority, rules and stability tend to be emotionally immature, often self-conscious, confused, frustrated, tense, angry, and dependent on others. Parents need to have clear, but fair rules, and apply them consistently, irrespective of how old the child is.

We live in a scientific and technology-driven era, which some refer to as the internet age. Although technology has many benefits and is useful, the dangers and disadvantages cannot be overlooked. Because of the availability of the internet and cell phones, children can easily download pornography and subscribe to chat services, often with devastating consequences. It is difficult for parents to mind their children all day - this is why values education is important. If parents teach their children to be obedient, they will likely not act against their parents' wishes. Parents need to educate themselves about technological advances in order to adequately and effectively educate their children to deal with pervasive technological changes.

Moral education is important to assist children to develop into morally responsible adults. When providing moral education, 'consistency' is the key. If parents and teachers are not consistent when they impart values to children the children will be confused and unable to distinguish between right and wrong.

Children need to be loved unconditionally by their parents, and need to be accepted with their flaws and imperfections, because no child is perfect. Mutual love and trust between parents and children are of paramount importance - these values are important in building children's self-esteem. Parents, (even if they are divorced) need to spend quality time with their children and be involved in all aspects of their lives, including their education. Children crave attention from their parents, especially when they are young, and parents should create an environment conducive to open communication. Only then will they know that they can approach their parents with all their problems.

When a child's need for self-esteem is met, he/she starts functioning on the level of self-actualization and can express his/her needs. Self-actualization or self-realization involves the need to utilize one's talents, abilities and potential – to become anything one is capable of. The need for self-actualization is unique in every human being – the biggest individual differences are found on this level of needs. If education is to promote self-realization, the family should provide children with the opportunities to know

themselves by means of, amongst others, involvement, experiences and the attribution of meaning to people and objects.

7.4.1.2 The school's role in the provision of moral education

a) Making the teaching of values part of the curriculum

- The important role of the school in providing values education cannot be disputed, especially in a multicultural society. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 stipulates which values have to be taught at school. The values entrenched in the Constitution must be brought to life in the classroom, irrespective of a learner's cultural background.
- These values have to be applied in all learning areas, not only in Life Orientation, even though this Learning Area focuses specifically on moral, spiritual, personal and social development. Life Orientation is an inter-disciplinary subject that integrates knowledge, skills and values embedded in all the other Learning Areas. It applies a holistic approach to learner development and is concerned with the personal, social, intellectual, cultural, moral, emotional, and spiritual growth and development of the child.
- Every teacher should instill values such as honesty, respect and diligence in his/her learners, irrespective of the Learning Area that he/she teaches. Not only should teachers live in accordance with these values, they must also emphasize why it is important to practice positive values.
- It is expected from teachers to behave professionally and ethically at all times.
- Except for the values that are entrenched in the Constitution, there are other values that also need to be practiced, and teachers have to take note of them.
- The school is an institution that should prepare learners for life. It should equip learners with the skills, knowledge and values to solve problems, to exercise their Constitutional rights and responsibilities, to value diversity, to make informed decisions, and also to make appropriate career choices.

b) Effective school management

- Effective school management cannot be separated from the role of the school in providing moral education. Effective schools are schools where values are imparted to children, where they are taught how to be responsible citizens, not to steal, to be honest, and to be tolerant, amongst others.
- The values that the school aspires to have to be stipulated in the mission statement of the school. All parents and learners must be aware of the values that the school stands for. Again, if children are taught values like responsibility, respect and honesty at home, many problems like truancy and drug/alcohol abuse may be overcome.
- The aim of a code of conduct is to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. School rules should be continually and regularly reviewed. If certain stipulations in the school rules prove not to be effective, they should be revised.
- Learners and parents should be made aware of the school rules and the mission and vision of the school. They need to know what measures will be taken when a learner contravenes the school rules.
- Uniformity should exist regarding the implementation of policies and of disciplinary procedures.
- Mutual participation among all stakeholders and other departments is necessary for effective school management, and for the creation of a healthy and safe environment at school. The Education Departments and schools should work together with other departments, such as Safety and Security, Social Welfare and Development, Sports and Recreation, Health, Economic Development and Arts and Culture, but also with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Teachers' Unions. These partners share common goals and objectives. The police, for example, could give talks at schools on crime and its impact on the community.

- Improved communication between schools and the Departments of Education (national and provincial) should be encouraged.
- Schools should have an open-door policy to put parents and others at ease when they visit the schools. Parental involvement in education should always be encouraged by the school.
- Regular meetings between the school and the parents should be encouraged. It will be beneficial for teachers to know the values that are practiced in a child's home. Teachers should also be informed about the home circumstances of learners.
- Community involvement in the form of motivational speakers, who have personal experiences of the consequences of a life without a positive value system, should be encouraged. Rehabilitated drug addicts or prison inmates or people who previously have lead sexual licentious lives can give valuable advice to learners.

c) Restructuring of teacher training

- Pedagogical or curriculum reform in tertiary institutions will have important repercussions for school-typical education. Tertiary institutions play an important role in the provision of education, because this is where would-be teachers receive their training. It is important for these institutions to keep up with the changing needs and challenges of school education.
- Teachers are the key contributors to the transformation process because they have to make sure that policies are implemented. However, the successful implementation of these policies requires new skills, which many teachers do not possess.
- Often teachers complain that they did not receive adequate training to teach Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and the Curriculum Statements. This has negative effects for schooling, because if teachers are not trained properly and lack the necessary skills, they will not be able to provide good quality education.
- Teachers are the key agents in determining the quality and the success of education. However, teachers often complain that tertiary institutions did not

prepare them adequately for the realities of being educators in a rapidly changing South Africa, realities like inadequate salaries, undisciplined children who use drugs and alcohol, the lack of career advancement opportunities, and overcrowded classrooms. The result is that 55% of teachers claim that they would leave teaching if they could (Wits Education Policy Unit (WEPU), 2005:2). These challenges that teachers are facing often cause work stress and demotivation among teachers, which result in a high absenteeism rate among teachers, and teachers who resign from the teaching profession to pursue other careers or to teach abroad. These challenges contribute to the moral crisis in schools. Would-be teachers should receive all the necessary information they need in order to make informed decisions about choosing teaching as a profession.

- Tertiary institutions should give prospective teachers more opportunities to do their practical teaching so that they may be exposed to practical school situations more.
- Due to the multicultural nature of our schools, teacher training institutions should empower future and in-service teachers with the skills to cope with multiculturalism in schools. These skills and the objectives of multicultural education were discussed in Chapter 4.
- Multiculturalism and pluralism are realities teachers need to accept. They are important principles in achieving values like social justice, equality and reconciliation. But because of the moral crisis in schools, teachers also need to be properly trained to deal with drug/alcohol use among learners (or at best be able to identify such learners and refer them to experts), and with learners affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. Because adolescents are going through a time when they are trying to make sense of the world, they might experience many challenges in their quests – teachers need to help them through this difficult journey.
- The Government needs to be aware of and address the challenges that teachers are facing in order to improve the current situation in schools.

7.4.1.3 *The responsibility of the community and other societal structures*

- Everyone in the society has a duty to try and minimize the moral decay. Other institutions, departments and the Government should contribute towards positive change. If everyone prioritizes positive values, it may be possible to have a crime-free and drug-free society, although this may only be a pipe-dream!
- As mentioned before, some children are orphans and have no adult supervision. The community, NGOs and the church can start community-based projects to help care for these children.
- Funds may be raised to provide in the financial needs of these children. Organizations can offer to assist the children with their schoolwork, or to place them with other families who are willing to take care of the children.
- Church ministers/pastors can also be invited by schools to talk to learners about spirituality, religion and values, and the importance thereof in the lives of people.
- Children need more than food and shelter. They also need love, rules, structure, affection, acceptance and attention. Without adult supervision, which is so crucial for education and for their moral, social and personal development, these children will lack the necessary skills to become responsible members of society.
- The ideal is for every child to be educated in his/her family towards adulthood, in line with the existing norms of society.

7.4.2 Limitations of the study

A limitation of this research project is the fact that the qualitative research was conducted within a small section and percentage of the population. Although only a small sample was involved, the study attempted to be representative. For practical reasons not all schools, communities, provinces, cultural and/or racial groups, teachers, parents and learners could participate in the research project. Only four schools and communities in the Eastern Cape were involved and all the participants were from one province, namely the Eastern Cape. Also, not all the teachers, learners and principals within the selected schools were part of the research, and not all the parents and

community leaders in the targeted communities participated in the interviews. The findings can therefore not be generalized to the entire South African population. In this regard Hancock (1998:3) and McMillan & Schumacher (2001:24) concede that one common criticism of qualitative research is that the findings should not be generalizable to a larger population because the sample groups are usually small. The research question for this study may have sought insight only into the specific sample that was used in this research. Therefore, generalizability of the findings to a wider, more diverse population is not an aim of qualitative research.

7.4.3 Recommendations for further research

In the light of the limitations that are mentioned in the previous paragraph, the researcher recommends that the research be extended to other provinces in the different areas/communities/schools in the country, because the extent of the problem as well as the guidelines may differ according to different circumstances.

7.5 FINAL CONCLUSION

This study undoubtedly established that the South African society is experiencing a moral dilemma, which is evident in social ills such as crime, drug/alcohol abuse, unruly and violent behavior and promiscuity. The aim of this study was to determine the role of values education in addressing the moral crisis faced by the South African society and schools. The nation is ethically challenged to transform the society. The indicated problems affect all South Africans in one way or another, and people are looking for solutions. One way through which social transformation can take place is through (values) education, at home and at school.

The study endeavoured to come up with possible solutions for the moral crisis, but more research is needed. The establishment of a positive and sound value system has

countless advantages for the country. People might then be able to live safely; schools would be places that both learners and educators enjoy; more people will possibly visit the country and fewer might leave; people can learn to trust one another and be less suspicious; and there will likely be a decrease in HIV/AIDS infections, crime, teenage pregnancies and drug/alcohol abuse. For these changes to take place, it will be a challenge for each and every one in the country to bring his/her part, and to contribute positively to the betterment of a united and healthy nation. Also, South Africans need to realize that the future and prosperity of the country lie in our own hands.

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