

## CHAPTER 3

### DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

#### 3.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive description of the direction and processes that I followed during the empirical study, in order to obtain potential answers to my primary research question, namely: In which manner do contextual factors influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools?

#### 3.2 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, I undertook an extensive literature investigation into *inter alia* the impact that HIV & AIDS has on the education sector, and the consequent responses of education authorities in South Africa with regard to the HIV & AIDS programme and curricula that were to be implemented in schools. The investigation in Chapter 2 provided the conceptual framework and background for my study, against which I planned and conducted an empirical study, in order to identify and investigate the manner in which contextual factors influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools.

In this chapter I shall present the methodological choices and procedures that formed the empirical part of my research endeavour. I shall aim to justify the choices that I made with regard to the research questions and the purpose of my study. This chapter will serve to inform the reader on the research philosophy, research design, methodology, research instruments, data collection strategies and data analysis procedures. Furthermore, I present a discussion on the strengths of my methodological choices as well as the challenges that I encountered. I conclude this chapter with a reflection on the

ethical guidelines and quality criteria that I pursued during my study (refer to Diagram 3.1 for a schematic overview of the research methodology and design).

### **3.3 PARADIGMATIC APPROACH**

Research paradigms consist of philosophical assumptions that provide guidance to the researcher's perspective with regard to the phenomenon that is being researched, as well as the actions employed (Creswell 2003:6; Patton 2002:17; Mertens 1998:3). In other words, the researcher states a knowledge claim with which he enters the research field. In this regard I (as the researcher) entered the research field with my own collection of concepts, values and methods, that I derived from a distinctive history, background, gender, class and race as determinative factors that influence and form my unique view on reality. Therefore I preferred to conduct my study from the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms (my selected meta-theories), ensuing a qualitative research approach (methodological paradigm) in order to best address the purpose of my study.

#### **3.3.1 An interpretivist and constructivist epistemology**

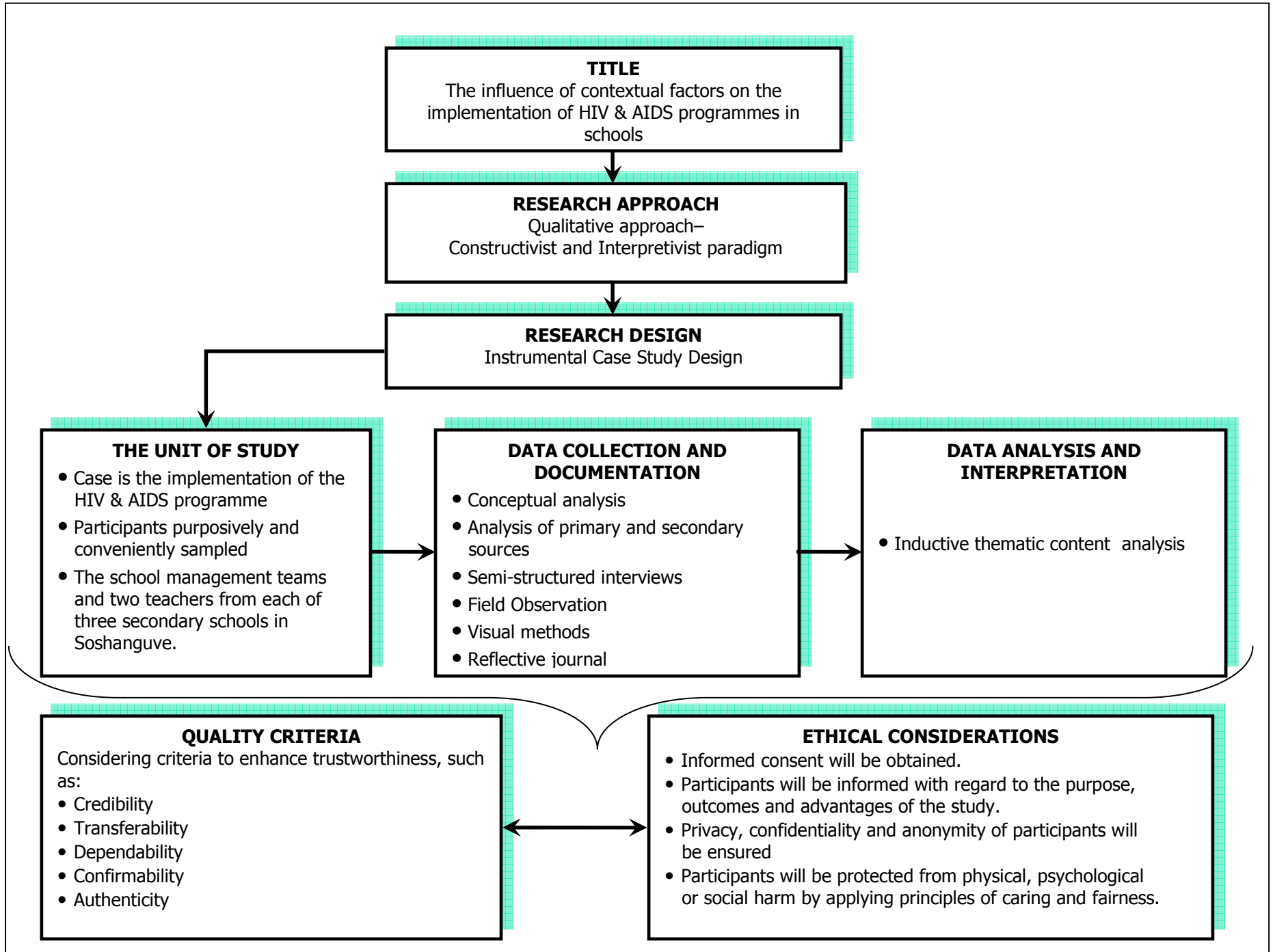
The Greek word *episteme* means "truthful knowledge", and relates to the concept "epistemic". Therefore, from an epistemological point of view, research has the comprehensive goal of searching for knowledge that is truthful. I concur with Mouton (2001:138), that it is impossible to construct fastidious answers to research that are authentic for all times and contexts. I view science as a search towards understanding phenomena, and I believe that there is no single truth which can be identified or researched objectively. Knowledge and "truths" are relative to the context of their application.

Furthermore, I view knowledge and "truths" as subjective and spiritual, based on personal experiences, insights, and beliefs (subjective). I adhere to the

universal law of cause and effect as the substantiation of events and phenomena that occur in society and ground the generation of knowledge. This subjective (or anti-positivist) approach to my research is grounded on my belief that individuals create their own reality as they interpret and understand their environment. In other words, unique persons create their own reality through their own minds (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:22). I concur with the view that human beings do not respond mechanically to their environment, but are initiators of their own actions. The reality that people perceive can never be fully explained, or understood as an undiscovered phenomenon, therefore, research can only provide a specific perspective on the truth, rather than claiming to expose the truth (Merriam 1998:46). Truth is not static, but rather a dynamic phenomenon interpreted through the meaning and understanding of people. In this study, I shall seek to generate knowledge that is truthful to the contextual realities within the social realm of education that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in secondary schools.

I preferred to conduct this study within the constructivist and interpretivist paradigms. The constructivist philosophy assumes "reality as multilayered, interactive, and a shared social experience interpreted by individuals" (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:396). In this study, I observed the school in society, and the manner in which it succeeds in the implementation of HIV & AIDS prevention programmes, as an important element within the multilayered reality of society. In addition to this, Donald *et al.* (2002:174) argue that constructivism is a perspective that views knowledge as actively constructed by individuals, groups and societies, and not merely as something that is simply conveyed. Furthermore, constructivism implies interpretation or analysis on peoples' active creation and building of meaning and significance (Sexton 1997:4).

Diagram 3.1: A schematic presentation of the research approach and design



Therefore, I considered constructivism to provide a framework for the interpretation and analysis of the manner in which teachers respond to the consequences of the contextual factors that influence the implementation efforts of schools with regard to the HIV & AIDS programme.

I also considered the fact that interpretivism emphasizes the permanence and priority of the real world of first-person, subjective experiences of people (Schwandt 1998:223). In my study, I (from an interpretivist view) therefore investigate the first-person and subjective lived-experiences<sup>11</sup> of teachers and school management that are responsible for implementing HIV & AIDS programmes in secondary schools. Furthermore, interpretivism implies the interpretation of human behaviour and experiences on both a verbal and a non-verbal level, with cognisance of the context of the participants' life-worlds, as well as their past experiences and existing understandings thereof (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2002:105). Assigning meaning constantly occurs within a particular context, meaning that human behaviour, feelings and experiences can only be understood within a particular context (which in my study refers to the implementation efforts and experiences of teachers with regard to the HIV & AIDS programme). In consideration of this, the experiences are interpreted in a personal, unique manner, which implies that reality, within the context of my study, is structured on different interpretations, namely mine, and those of the participants.

In view of Schwandt's (1998:222) elucidation that constructivists and interpretivists presume that, to understand this world of meaning, it must be interpreted. I aimed to gain understanding (*Verstehen*) with regard to the lived-experiences and personal worlds of the participants, in terms of their perceptions and interpretations, but by taking into *account* that I am a co-creator of meaning (Terre Blanche & Kelly 2002:125). As such, I aimed to clarify the process of meaning construction and attempted to explain what

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<sup>11</sup> The person **lives** or **gives meaning to** his/her experiences.

and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of the participants. I aim to report on experiences and perspectives as understood in a particular context, thereby working with data in context, and constructing meaning. I believe that the presentation of an interpretation is in itself the construction of meanings and experiences; it is to present the researcher's (my) construction of the constructions of the actors (participants) in the study (Schwandt 1998:223).

My decision, to conduct this study within the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, can be related to the aim of my study, which focuses on an in-depth understanding of the personal perceptions and views of the teachers who are expected to implement an HIV & AIDS programme in the context of their schools. Conducting my study from an interpretivist and constructivist approach concurs with the following common principles for a constructivist and interpretivist approach, such as that development is contextual, individuals are producers of their own development, cognition is an active relating of events, and that meaning-making is self-evolution (Hayes & Oppenheim 1997:21). In consideration of this, I aimed to engage in a search for the deep structure that underlies the construction of meaning as expressed in specific societal phenomena and actions, that is I engaged in a deep search for contextual factors within schools that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes (Hayes & Oppenheim 1997:33). Therefore, I engaged in this study with the assumption that school management teams and teachers who are responsible for the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme will construct their own understanding of what the implementation entails (in their particular contexts), which is then related to contextual factors that are present in the context of their schools.

De Vos (2000:240) states that interpretative research aims to understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that underlie everyday human action. In addition to this, I adhere to Trauth's (2001:219) stance of interpretivism

and believe that nearly all knowledge is attained, or at least filtered, through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents and other artefacts. As an interpretivist researcher, I attempted to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assigned to them. Therefore, an interpretative paradigm suited the focus of my research, as its purpose is to gain an in-depth understanding of contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes.

In view of the interpretative and constructivist paradigms, that reflect the belief that humans construct reality individually and collectively, I entered the research field with the assumption that school management teams and teachers construct their own meaning with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in their school's contexts. I accepted that their constructs will be based on their interpretations of what it entails to implement such a programme. I then created my own reality, by interpreting their constructions of reality, considering that the school management teams' and teachers' interpretations of what the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme entails, were in turn constructed through their active participation in contexts that are filled with their own meanings and constructions of an HIV & AIDS programme (in this regard please refer to Diagram 3.2).

### **3.3.2 A qualitative methodological approach**

Accepting that a variety of ways exists to make sense of the world, I consider a qualitative approach as suitable for addressing the primary aim of this study. My intention is to explore, describe and interpret the experiences of teachers with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, and through a qualitative approach, it would be possible to construct the "reality" as perceived from the participants' point of view. A qualitative research approach and design aim at gaining greater insight into man's situation (Ericson 1986:125). I expect a qualitative approach to provide me

with the opportunity to gain access into the subjective experiences of individuals or groups (the participants), with focus on the contexts in which they interact with each other, and the efforts they make regarding their tasks. Furthermore, a qualitative approach to research places an emphasis on enhanced comprehension of human behaviour and experiences (Garbers 1996:15; Neuman 1997:37). Therefore, by approaching my study within the qualitative framework, I may be able to consider the influence of relevant factors on social relationships, and consequently this may grant me access to an understanding of the way in which contextual factors influence the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme, from the participants' points of view (MacMillan & Schumacher 2001:16).

In assuming that multiple realities are socially constructed by individuals and society, I believe a qualitative approach will be valuable to determine teachers' experiences and understanding with regard to the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in their schools. In consideration of my intention to reflect on the experiences of teachers from various perspectives, I consider a qualitative research approach most appropriate, as it may enable me to understand meaning and influence in a more multifaceted way (Parker, Dalrymple & Durden 2000:82). Furthermore, I took into account that my research may identify information that I did not anticipate and, in following a qualitative research approach, I would be able to continue discussions that are not limited by predetermined closed questions. As such, a qualitative approach would present me with an opportunity to acquire vivid information with regard to the teachers' feelings, thoughts and actions, as well as their beliefs in respect of the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme in their schools. In view of my intention to interpret and create my own construction of the views and experiences of teachers, qualitative research would enable me to study meanings that the participants ascribed to their experiences (Willig 2001:15). I therefore cannot claim that I am rigidly

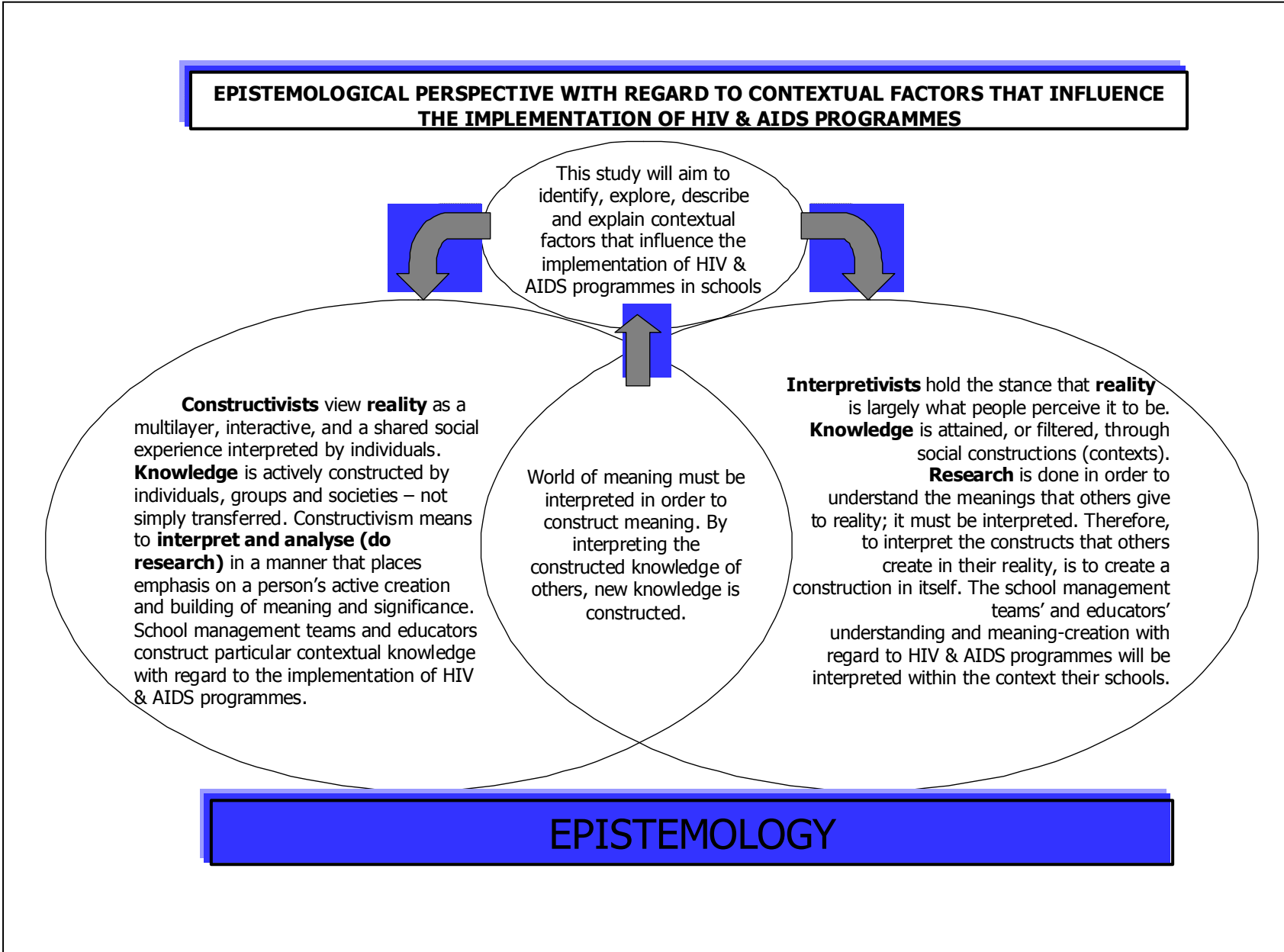


objective, as I shall be subjectively involved in reporting or narrating my research (Adler & Adler 1994:110).

Therefore, by undertaking qualitative research, I aim to develop an understanding of the manner in which reality (the world) is constructed by individuals in a specific social setting, in terms of symbols, structures and social roles familiar to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:112; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004:48) . Qualitative techniques may therefore enable me to share in the views and understandings of other people and to explore the manner in which they give meaning to their life-worlds, to themselves and to others (Leedy 1997:107; Glesne & Peshkin 1992:6).

My decision, to approach the study within a qualitative paradigm, was firstly guided by the nature of my study, in terms of the research question and research aim. Secondly, I was of the opinion that the qualitative approach corresponds with my belief that the world consists of multiple realities which differ according to context and time (Mertens 1998:26; Creswell 2003:10). I aimed to explore and focus on the processes, meaning-giving patterns, and structural characteristics of schools' and teachers' programme implementation efforts in order to address my research questions. This qualitative research process is described by Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke (2004:4) as the *"use of the unusual or the deviant and unexpected as a source of insight and a mirror whose reflection makes the unknown perceptible in the known, and the known perceptible in the unknown, thereby opening up further possibilities for recognition"*.

Diagram 3.2: Epistemological perspective with regard to interpretivism and constructivism



### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

According to Creswell (2003:15), a case study design is appropriate for research that requires an in-depth exploratory and descriptive inquiry into an activity, process, programme, event, or one or more individuals. Therefore, I selected a case study design, considering that the purpose of my research is to identify and investigate the contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in their schools (Creswell 2003:15). Furthermore, in the light of the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, as well as the qualitative nature of my research (refer to paragraph 3.3.1 and 3.3.2), this study may be described as interpretative and subjective, and will be conducted as a case study. As can be expected in a case study, the collected data proved to be a mixture of new and existing information, due to the “*low degree of control and structure*” in a qualitative case study design itself (Mouton 2001:149). Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that this design reinforced the exploratory and inductive approach of my study, and proved to be coherent with my aim to identify and investigate contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools.

#### **3.4.1 Instrumental case study design**

I consider a research design to relate the purpose of the study and the primary research questions to the methodological building blocks and finally to the findings and conclusions, in a coherent and logical manner. Therefore, I support Bless and Higson-Smith’s (1995:63) definition of research design as “*a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts and phenomena*”. For the purpose of my study, and in order to answer my descriptive and exploratory research questions, I selected an instrumental multiple-site, case study design. This decision enabled me to scientifically investigate and obtain an in-depth description of the lived-

experiences of my research participants (in three schools) with regard to the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme (the case). The selected schools were of secondary importance, as my primary aim was to obtain insight into the factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme. Such a design type specifically focuses on providing a clear understanding of a specific issue (Stake 2000:437; Merriam 1998:65; Bless & Higson-Smith 1995:68). Furthermore, an instrumental case study design is selected with the aim of addressing my research question, and in order to obtain insight into one essential issue, rather than the cases themselves (Bergen & While 2000:45; Stake 2000:438; Berg 2001:68; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:183). This may provide me with a clear understanding of the manner in which contextual factors influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools.

My selection of and inquiry into the status of this specific programme concurs with a case study design, which entails a detailed description of a single individual or a few individuals, a set of documents, an event, a programme or an activity (described within their settings), in order to provide the necessary context (Creswell 2003:15; Henning *et al.*, 2004:41). In the context of my study, I did not aim to obtain knowledge that is generalisable, but instead I aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teachers that are responsible for implementing the HIV & AIDS programme in their schools. However, the probability of transferring certain trends or similarities to other comparable implementation efforts or schools does exist, as other schools in the country might display a context and characteristics similar to the ones described in this research. Although I acknowledge that the potential for generalization is limited, I had the opportunity to provide rich, in-depth information and material for readers to uncover on their own (that which even I might have overlooked); as well as to reflect on theory and to encourage hypotheses for consequent studies (Stake 2000:440; Berg 2001:231).

By selecting an instrumental case study design, I considered it possible to acquire a thorough understanding of other possible external theoretical questions or problems with regard to the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme in schools (Berg 2001:225). Although I investigated the selected schools as cases, analysed the contexts that were evident, and described relevant activities (Stake 2000:439), these schools functioned as supportive role players in focussing on my actual research interest (primary question), which is exploring the factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme. By utilizing an instrumental case study design, I was able to acquire authentic descriptions of the experiences of school management teams and teachers, who are responsible for the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in their schools. Therefore, I concur with Stake (2000:439) that an instrumental case study design offered me the opportunity to not only comprehend the central issues with regard to my research problem, but it also brought other critical dynamics with regard to the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme to light.

I decided on an instrumental case study design, as it also offered me the advantage of constantly reflecting on and reconsidering the significance and value of the impressions that I gained (Creswell 2003:16; Stake 2000:440).

### **3.4.2 Selection of participants**

In view of the importance of selecting a reliable sample of literature and participants for this study, my intention with the selection of the participants was primarily to ensure that they are directly, or as closely as possible, related to the research problem. Therefore, I aimed to select teachers that were responsible for the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in secondary schools (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:39; Creswell 2003:185).

In consideration of my intention, to explore and describe a phenomenon (contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme) and not to involve all teachers in South Africa, I chose a qualitative approach. A small sample size is characteristic of a qualitative approach, as larger groups would not necessarily guarantee more representivity (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:185). Furthermore, it would have been problematical to interview every teacher that is responsible for implementing the HIV & AIDS programme, hence I selected a sample population by means of purposeful or convenience sampling.

### **3.4.3 Convenience and purposive sampling**

I initially gained access to the schools by means of a “gatekeeper” (Creswell 2003:184), whom I regard as an insider in the schools where I conducted my study. This “gatekeeper” was the subject facilitator for Life Orientation in the Tshwane North District of Education for several years, as well as a resident in the area where the schools are located. On this person’s recommendation, I selected three secondary schools to participate in my study. The three secondary schools were conveniently selected for the purpose of this research, as I am currently a teacher at a school in Soshanguve. Therefore the selection of schools enhanced my accessibility to the research participants, as well as to suitable facilities for conducting semi-structured interviews. In utilizing convenience sampling as an initial sampling technique, I kept in mind that convenience sampling (or opportunity sampling) required that the nearest individuals (schools) serve as participants, and that the sampling process continues in order to obtain the required sample size (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:102).

After the principals of the three schools had permitted me to conduct my research at their schools, I purposively sampled four participants from each school. I kept in mind that, in research on effective teaching (programme

implementation), it is considered to be most informative to select expert or master teachers, instead of a sample of all teachers, and that convenience and purposive sampling has the purpose of selecting information-rich cases, in order to obtain in-depth understanding (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:176; Patton 2002:230).

I therefore purposively selected four participants from each of the three conveniently selected schools. To assist the school principals, two teachers in each school, that had been trained as “Master Trainers” with reference to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes, were included as participants in my study (in the absence of such teachers, I included teachers that were responsible for teaching Life Orientation in the school). These “Master Trainers” are nominated teachers from secondary schools that had been trained by their respective School Districts with regard to HIV & AIDS education. These teachers had attended a four-day training course, in order to enable them to implement the HIV & AIDS education programme. It was expected that these teachers (Master Trainers) would then provide the same training to colleagues of their own schools, as well as neighbouring schools in their cluster. I choose to include these teachers because of their apparent special interest in the HIV & AIDS programme in schools, and the specialised training they had received from the Gauteng Department of Education. I regarded these participants as having specialised knowledge with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes, and as people who would most likely be able to provide me with valuable information.

I further purposively included the school principal and the head of department for Human and Social Sciences of each selected school that I regard to be ultimately accountable and responsible for the school curriculum and implementation thereof. I decided to include only secondary schools to be the focus of my study, because the policy of the Department of Education at that time only required for HIV & AIDS programmes to be implemented in

secondary schools. Similar programmes have not been developed for primary schools yet, and secondary schools in Soshanguve only include Grade 10, 11 and 12. My selection of the case and participants is summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: A summary of the participants in the sample

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NUMBER	SAMPLING STRATEGY	CRITERIA FOR SELECTION
<b>Case</b>	Secondary schools implementing the HIV & AIDS programme	3	Typical case sampling, and convenience sampling	Secondary schools that are required to implement the HIV & AIDS programme as part of Life Orientation
<b>Participants</b>	Principals as participants	3	Purposive sampling	Responsible for the schools' curriculum delivery
	Heads of department as participants	3	Purposive sampling	Responsible for the schools' curriculum delivery
	Teacher participants	6	Purposive sampling	Trained as "Master Trainers" and/or teaching Life Orientation

In view of the fact that the participants in my study only represent a small section of the people and schools to whom the research might possibly apply, I strived to select participants who are fairly typical of the larger group of people and schools on which I focused, being South African teachers who are responsible for the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in secondary schools (Creswell 2003:199; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:404).

In my opinion, I employed appropriate sampling strategies with regard to the purpose of my study, for various reasons, that include the sensitivity of HIV & AIDS as a topic, and the corresponding limited insight into contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes. Furthermore, I had to consider that the participants should be easily reachable, and be able to be frank with their responses, in the light of the sensitive nature of HIV & AIDS, as well as be able to communicate their perceptions through English, as



I did not make use of an interpreter (Henning *et al.*, 2004:71; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:405).

### **3.4.4 Data collection and documentation**

During the collection of data, I made use of multiple data collection strategies and actions in order to obtain relevant, in-depth and context-rich information with regard to contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:39). Furthermore, I aimed to ensure that the process of crystallisation would be possible, by making use of several data collection methods and by indicating different nuances of the gathered data (Janesick 2000:288). In the light of my selected qualitative paradigm and instrumental case study design, I decided to make use of a conceptual analysis, the analysis of primary and secondary sources, semi-structured interviews, audio-visual methods, field observations, and a reflective journal, in order to collect data.

#### **3.4.4.1 Conceptual analysis**

I included a conceptual analysis, as a non-interactive qualitative mode of inquiry, in order to portray the meanings, use and application of concepts in relation to the purpose of my study. During this process, I aimed to isolate the combined units of words or concepts, in order to identify and investigate contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:39) regard the use of a conceptual analysis as a data collection method with the aim to "*take apart, revisit, reconsider, study and describe*" the diverse meanings of concepts, to present unambiguous perspectives of the problem that is being investigated. I decided to include my conceptual analysis, as it relates to the problem of my study in Chapter 2 of this thesis (refer to paragraph 2.8).

#### **3.4.4.2 Analysis of primary and secondary sources**

In view of the fact that the case in my study is **contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme**, I considered the analysis of primary and secondary sources (as one of my data collection methods) as of paramount importance (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:451; Henning *et al.*, 2004:99). Therefore, I conducted an analysis of primary sources, that included original documentation or the remains thereof, statements from persons who participated in HIV & AIDS programme related events in schools, or were eyewitnesses to such events. I also considered the remains of sources such as HIV & AIDS school policies and documentation, that I presumed had to be developed and available in order to supply information. Furthermore, I perused official documentation with relation to HIV & AIDS, with the aim of providing a vivid picture of the departmental stance and requirements with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools.

I also scrutinized textbooks, encyclopaedias, dissertations and theses as secondary sources of data (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:42; Henning *et al.*, 2004:188; Leedy 1997:101). Although these sources are considered to be reports from people who were not eyewitness to, or part of, an event – but only reported what the person, who had physically been part of an event, had said or wrote – I found these sources invaluable with regard to current theories and developments in the field of HIV & AIDS prevention and education.

#### **3.4.4.3 Semi-structured interviews**

I conducted semi-structured interviews with six teachers who are responsible for Life Orientation and/or HIV & AIDS programmes, as well as with three principals and three heads of department for Human and Social Sciences in

the three selected schools. I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews in order to allow for flowing discussions, and to obtain detailed information with regard to the participants' experiences with the implementation and presentation of the HIV & AIDS education programme in their schools (Merriam 1998:74). As semi-structured interviews enable the participants to share their personal experiences and perceptions (O'Donoghue & Punch 2003:57), I included probes within the questions in order to prompt the participants for clarifying information. The questions on the interview instrument (refer to Addendum A) were developed by myself and my study supervisor on the basis of an intensive literature study. The questions were then scrutinised by two critical readers, and some adjustments were made in order to create more opportunities for the participants to share their own opinions. For the purpose of my study, I included more open-ended questions with the aim of creating occasions for the participants to communicate their personal experiences, opinions and beliefs (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:271; Schurink 1998:300). Thereafter, the instrument was viewed and approved by the ethical committee of the University of Pretoria as well as the Research Approval Committee of the Department of Education (refer to Addenda B and C).

From an interpretivist perspective, I obtained valuable information on the participants' perspectives and experiences with regard to the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in their schools, based on my view that qualitative interviewing is an interactive process of meaning-making. I believe that the questions asked during the interviews invited the participants to share their perspectives, knowledge and significant experiences regarding the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme (Patton 2002:306; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:268). I approached the interviews with the stance that it is a two-way communication interaction, during which I, as the interviewer, endeavoured to create meaning of what was expressed by the interviewee (verbally and non-verbally), thereby gaining information with regard to

contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools. I regard a qualitative interview as a conversation between the researcher and a research participant. The researcher has a broad plan of investigation for the interview, but not a definite set of questions that have to be asked in particular words or in a particular order. I view a qualitative interview as a conversation during which specific topics, that are raised by the participant, are dealt with, while I (as the interviewer) am able to determine a general direction, to obtain research-relevant information (Babbie & Mouton 2001:278; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:269). The interviews were audio-taped with the permission of the participants. My reporting of this activity was supported by my field observations and reflective journal, as supplementary data collection strategies. I then commenced with my first level of analysis, by using the recorded data, with the advantage that I was able to correct possible limitations such as a lack of intuition and recollection (Silverman 1994:119).

At the onset of my data collection, I encountered a serious delay. I scheduled my interviews during May and June 2007, but was forced to postpone my research, because of the National Public Service Strike Action that occurred in the same period. After the schools had re-opened in July 2007, I was fortunately able to re-schedule the interviews at the schools during August and September 2007. Although I was frustrated by the delay in my research, I realised that this was a typical occurrence one could experience while doing research, and this is the reality in which many teachers are attempting to implement the HIV & AIDS programme in their schools. I considered this as an example of external factors that influence the implementation of not only the HIV & AIDS programme in a school, but the whole curriculum as such.

I conducted twelve interviews during August and September 2007 (refer to Table 3.2 below for the schedule of interviews). I managed to have two interviews per school during a week, because the management of the school

and the Department of Education only allowed for interviews to be conducted after school hours, and the teachers were following a busy schedule in order to recover time that had been lost during the National Public Service Strike Action. My intention was to avoid disrupting the organisation of the school, in view of the fact that an interview took an average of 50 minutes. After each interview had been transcribed, I gave the transcript to the participant to verify the correctness thereof. This action was welcomed and appreciated by the participants, and I believe it enhanced their trust in me as a researcher, and contributed to the authenticity of my data.

Table 3.2: The schedule for interviews conducted

DATE	PARTICIPANT	CONFIRMATION OF TRANSCRIPT
1 <sup>st</sup> August 2007	Case 1: Principal	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
1 <sup>st</sup> August 2007	Case 1: Head of Department	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
6 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 1: Teacher 1	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
6 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 1: Teacher 2	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
13 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 2: Principal	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
13 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 2: Head of Department	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
20 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 2: Teacher 1	27 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
20 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 2: Teacher 2	27 <sup>th</sup> August 2007
27 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 3: Principal	3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2007
27 <sup>th</sup> August 2007	Case 3: Head of Department	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2007
3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2007	Case 3: Teacher 1	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2007
3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2007	Case 3: Teacher 2	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2007

#### 3.4.4.4 Field Observation

In view of the fact that field observation is considered a fundamental part of nearly all qualitative research methods (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:41; Adler & Adler 1994:389), I employed observation as a part of my data collection. During the interviews, my observation mainly served as a validation measure, allowing me to authenticate what I had heard via participants, confirming and verifying my observations, that included any non-verbal signals during verbal conversations. I documented descriptive observational data in the form of a field journal and photographs of events, people, actions, and objects in the setting (school). During the interviews, I made notes *in*

*situ*, then after the interview and initial observations, I expanded and recorded my observations as comprehensively and as soon as possible in my reflective journal, in order to paint a clear picture of my observations and develop a tentative record of ongoing analysis and interpretation.

#### **3.4.4.5 Visual data collection**

I included the use of visual data collection by means of photographs to supplement the data generated during the interviews and observations, mainly as means of data capturing. These methods of qualitative research presented me with verifications of the activities of the participants, and made it possible to collect information that could be difficult to obtain otherwise (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:282; Creswell 2003:189), such as visual evidence that could be missed during interviews. I believe that the use of visual data collection (photographs) contributed to the richness of my data. Furthermore, the use of visual data collection methods limits the potential subjective bias of observations of a single event, as well as the probability that only frequently occurring events are noticed (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:313). In addition to documenting interviews and observations, I made use of visual material to mainly document the setting of the schools, and to provide visual substantiation in terms of HIV & AIDS programme implementation efforts in the schools. Visual data were collected in the school's community as well as on the school premises, photographing the setting, facilities and resources.

#### **3.4.4.6 Reflective journal**

I made use of a reflective journal (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:228), firstly as an additional data collection and capturing method, and secondly as a means of portraying and reflecting on my experiences, perceptions and interpretations during my study (refer to Addendum F). I included descriptive field notes on aspects such as a reflection on the methods that I used during the process of

data collection and analysis; my reactions to observations and interviews; as well as the ethical issues, tensions and challenges experienced during my inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:122).

During the data collection and analysis processes, I made notes of the research procedures and progress, which allowed me to reflect on the processes when the need arose. I kept record of the dates, interview schedules, venues and duration of interviews. Field notes also enabled me to document my observations during school visits, and comprehensively contributed to my reflective journal. In addition, I documented my own personal reflections, emotions, experiences, achievements and misfortunes whenever they occurred (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:313; Lincoln & Guba 1985:327).

Even though I continuously tried to compile extensive field notes, I occasionally forgot to note down immediate impressions when interviewing participants or being involved in informal discussions. Therefore, I wrote down my observations and occurrences during the interviews and school visits, as soon as possible after each session. I am aware that some detailed information might have been lost doing this, therefore I relied on the audio-tapes of each session, making it possible to revisit the process at later stages and elaborate on my field notes (Patton 2002:310; Creswell 2003:190).

I believe that my reflective journal contributed to the depth of my data. The journal enabled me to reflect on the practicalities of my fieldwork and on initial interpretations of the collected data. I regard my journal as an attempt to facilitate and systematise the interpretative process that is at the heart of qualitative research (Ezzy 2002:72).

### **3.4.5 Data analysis and interpretation**

During the analysis of my collected data, I made use of inductive thematic analysis (also referred to as content analysis or pattern analysis), which is commonly linked to a case study design. My intention with the data analysis was to understand the different core meanings of the data by means of an investigation of the relationship between concepts, constructs and variables, to uncover any possible patterns or trends that can be isolated, and to establish themes in the data. Therefore, I examined the data for constructs, themes, and patterns that I could use to identify, explore, describe and explain contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, by means of an arrangement of the collected data into larger coherent wholes (Mouton 2001:108-109; Hatch 2002:148; Merriam 1998:7; O'Donoghue & Punch 2003:47). Leedy (1997:158) refers to this type of analysis as interpretational or structural analysis. I analysed my data systematically by means of thematic analysis. The data were inductively analysed to enable me to identify recurring patterns or common themes that are evident across the data. My main focus during the data analysis was to obtain an understanding of the essences of the lived-experiences of my participants with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes.

On the basis of the basic guidelines for inductive thematic analysis and interpretation, I analysed and interpreted the raw data collected from the interview sessions, observations, reflective journal and visual data (photographs). I commenced my analysis by reviewing all the raw data, in order to obtain a general sense of the information and its global meaning. During the data collection, I already started data analysis by making short notes during interviews and observations (as described in paragraph 3.4.4.3), as part of the continuous process of searching for similarities, differences, categories, themes, concepts and ideas. This was followed by transcribing the interviews, and typing my field notes and reflective journal. Again, I made



margin notes with regard to my general thoughts and impressions, to serve as my initial sorting process. I then gave the transcribed interviews and preliminary findings to the participants in order for them to be part of the data analysis process, and to verify that the data were a true reflection of what had transpired. I trust that this contributed to and enhanced the authenticity and dependability of my findings (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:164), based on the assumptions of interpretivism and constructivism. I regard participant evaluation (or member checking) as an important and valuable process during data collection and analysis, as the participants may wish to include additional information or even propose an alternative way of conveying the issue at hand. I also conducted member checking during my interviews, by means of rephrasing topics and asking explanatory questions, to obtain a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the communications of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:410, 462).

After this process, I grouped the data into manageable “chunks” of data (clusters) and created a basic classification system or categories for coding. I found it very useful to group the categories together within tables in order to be able to identify emerging patterns and/or themes. I organised the raw data and possible topics (that I discussed with my supervisor) and identified related themes, patterns, similarities and differences, which I later named and listed (Creswell 2003:191-194; Henning *et al.*, 2004:127).

I then conducted an independent data analysis, and had it examined by my supervisor. Hereafter, I scrutinized the data again and systematically engaged in a formal coding process to generate a description of the setting and categories for analysis. I repeatedly read the sections of raw data until I was satisfied that all the raw data were tabled, sorted, coded and grouped into appropriate categories. This resulted in the development of a classification system in terms of themes and sub-themes, and eventually in my

interpretation, based on my opinions and on information obtained from the literature (Creswell 2003:195; Henning *et al.*, 2004:128; Mouton 2001:109).

### **3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA**

I regard the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative research as dependent upon the extent to which the researcher (myself) is able to persuade the reader or listener that the outcomes of the study are noteworthy and reliable (Babbie & Mouton 2001:271). The quality of qualitative research can be enhanced by way of rigorous methods, the credibility of the researcher, an underlying philosophical belief in the value of qualitative research, and the consequent significance of qualitative methods, purposive sampling, inductive analysis and a holistic way of thinking. In order to account for the trustworthiness of my study, I exercised critical self-awareness and did not regard myself as the expert. I instead, focused on being open to listen and learn, rather than to speak, teach and control. I was also mindful of my potential biases throughout my study, reflecting in my field journal, and having debriefing sessions with my supervisor. In this regard, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:21) explain that the trustworthiness of qualitative research is enhanced by strategies that focus on the 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability' and 'confirmability' of the study (terms that replace the customary positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity). Cohen *et al.* (2003:108) include 'authenticity' as a strategy to increase the trustworthiness of research. I shall now elaborate on the quality of my study in terms of the credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity thereof.

#### **3.6.1 Credibility**

I view the qualitative concept of credibility as referring to the purpose of presenting a truthful account of the phenomenon that is described in the

study. Credibility, in qualitative terms, is used as the equivalent of the (positivist) quantitative term of internal validity. Poggenpoel (1998:351) regards credibility as an indication that "*the research was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the phenomena were accurately identified and described*". Furthermore, I regard credibility as an indication that the research findings that were captured are a true account of the context that was studied, and that the researcher learned what he/she intended to learn (Babbie & Mouton 2001:276). Credibility answers to the question as to what extent the findings are truthful, and implies professional integrity, intellectual precision and methodological competence (Creswell 2003:196; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:603; Henning *et al.*, 2004:149, 151)

In order to ensure the credibility of my findings and study, I made use of several strategies and procedures. Firstly, I conducted twelve interviews with participants at their schools, with the aim of relating to them in the setting in which they are responsible for the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme. I supported this primary data collection strategy with a field journal and observations, as well as visual data in the form of photographs. Secondly, I continuously reflected on my subjectivity and biases, and aimed to remain open-minded, in order to obtain insight into my personal orientations and prejudices that might influence my research and interpretations. As a third strategy, I made use of field notes and a reflective journal to describe the research context and environment, and to document observations. A fifth strategy entailed a continuous review, critical report and guidance from my supervisor during the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. I further made use of member checking, and provided the participants with transcripts of the interviews in order for them to verify, correct and elaborate, as a sixth strategy. My seventh strategy was to include examples and evidence of the raw data and analysis in this thesis, in order to provide a trail of evidence of the research process. Lastly, I applied crystallisation by considering multiple perspectives, such as various forms of

data collection. I used the same method of data collection regarding different participants in various settings and on different occasions. I utilized theory (conceptual framework in Chapter 2) as a basis to interpret the data from different perspectives, and my supervisor assisted and monitored me during data analysis and interpretation, although I was primarily responsible for finalising the analysis (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:113; Babbie & Mouton 2001:277; Creswell 2003:197).

### **3.6.2 Transferability**

I understand transferability as referring to the possibility of the findings of a study being transferred to the wider population (Babbie & Mouton 2001:277). Transferability is the qualitative parallel to the quantitative concept of 'external validity', and refers to the dependability of the findings of the study, indicating whether or not the findings are applicable and can be transferred to other contexts. In consideration of the fact that meanings vary across different contexts of human interaction, I aimed to obtain transferable rather than generalisable findings, by providing sufficient descriptive information with regard to contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, as well as about the meanings that evolved during the investigation. It is the onus of the readers of my study to determine whether they regard transferability of this study and the findings thereof possible, by establishing their own index of transferability (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:109).

In view of the fact that I conducted my study from an interpretivist paradigm and qualitative approach, I did not aim to generalise the findings of my study to the wider community, or to other schools. Although the primary focus of my study was to identify, explore, explain and describe contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools, I only included selected schools and participants whose opinions do not necessarily

represent those of other teachers and schools. Therefore, my results and findings cannot be generalised and applied to other settings (Henning *et al.*, 2004:146; Creswell 2003:196; Leedy 1997:34, 169).

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

The qualitative term *dependability* (or *auditability*) is equal to the quantitative (positivist) term *reliability*. It refers to an indication of whether or not the findings would be the same if the study was replicated in the same (or a similar) context or with similar participants (Babbie & Mouton 2001:278). According to Guba and Lincoln (in Babbie & Mouton 2001:278), a display of credibility seems to be sufficient to establish the existence of dependability.

As I have mentioned in paragraph 3.6.2 above, the aim of my study was not to generalise, but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools. I considered and included contributions from other persons during the data analysis, namely my supervisor's and the participants' affirmation, and I regard this as a strategy that strengthened the possibility of my findings being fairly dependable and possibly comparable to findings regarding similar groups of people and contexts. In addition to this, I provided a highly detailed methodological description, in order to allow replication of the study in similar contexts (Shenton 2004:71; Henning *et al.*, 2004:146).

### **3.6.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is regarded as the extent to which the findings of the research are the product of the focus of research and not of the biases of the researcher. In quantitative terms, this refers to the level of objectivity that was adhered to during the research (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:108). Freedom from bias is contradictory to the underlying theories of the interpretivist and

constructivist approach, according to which the values and motives of the researcher do play a fundamental part in the research process (Babbie & Mouton 2001:278). Observer and researcher bias can be regarded as a given during any qualitative study, in view of personal views and values that unavoidably influence the manner in which data are interpreted during qualitative analysis. In my attempt to answer to the criterion of confirmability of my findings, I declared such biases from the start, and involved others such as my supervisor and the participants during data analysis. In addition to this, I constantly reflected on my thoughts and experiences in my field journal, and provided a chain of evidence as a demonstration of interpretations and the processes that I used to reach conclusions (Henning *et al.*, 2004:151; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:36).

I also considered the fact that scientific research on sensitive issues (such as HIV & AIDS, gender, and sexuality) usually compels the researcher to maintain meticulous self-control during data collection and analysis. I therefore regarded confirmability as more important than my being dispassionate or unbiased in the collection and interpretation of the data, and cautioned myself not to alter the personal views of others to match my own preconceived notions or preferences. Research integrity necessitated that I overcome personal and prejudicial attitudes, personal preconceptions and value judgements, and not be subject to traditional or "received systems of thought" (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:129). I took care to not only consider seemingly strong ideas and most apparent discoveries, but I also considered the inexplicable or complex ones in respect of the importance they had for addressing the primary question of my study.

### **3.6.5 Authenticity**

Ensuring authenticity in qualitative research implies that the researcher portrays a balanced view of the various perspectives, opinions, beliefs and

values of the participants. I regard authenticity as the outcome of the ability of the researcher to report a situation through the eyes of the participants (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:108). In my study, I attempted to achieve authenticity by means of member checking and various data collection methods, in order to obtain fairness and to exhibit a balanced portrayal of various realities with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools. I aimed to ensure ontological authenticity by providing a fresh and more sophisticated understanding of the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools. I attempted to provide a better understanding of the challenges (contextual factors) that teachers experience, and to contribute to the improvement of the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, and, as such, to ensure catalytic authenticity in my research (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:108, 120; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:415).

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In view of the nature of my data collection strategies, I was conscious about the responsibility that I bear with regard to respect for the teaching profession as well as for the participants (Strydom 1998:25; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:292). During my research, I aimed not to infringe upon the dignity of the participants, and constantly provided them with a clear picture of the purpose of my study and the processes that I was following.

#### **3.7.1 Informed consent**

Considering the sensitive nature of certain data that I might collect, I obtained authorization from the relevant authorities, such as the Gauteng Department of Education, school principals, and teachers prior to entering the research field (see Addenda C and D regarding permission to conduct research, and Addendum E for the various letters of voluntary informed consent). This indicates that the research participants had the right to choose

whether or not to participate in the research study, after I provided them with information that could have influenced their decisions (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:421; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:292). During the data collection, I provided the research participants with adequate information about the purpose of the study, the procedures I would follow, as well as the possible advantages of the outcomes of the study. I also made it clear that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, the schools and the data would be respected, and that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, if they wished to do so. No participants withdrew their consent or any information that they had provided during the study. In addition to inviting the participants to ask questions in order to clarify uncertainties, I explained the possible outcome and benefits of the study to the participants at the beginning of the interview sessions, and provided the opportunity to clarify their own thoughts and also learn from the process (Creswell 2003:64; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:291).

### **3.7.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

In view of the principle of privacy, I aimed to ensure and protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants at all times (Strydom 1998:28; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:422; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:292). The benefit of providing the participants with the assurance, that their privacy will be protected, was that it assured me that I would obtain their maximum response and cooperation during interviews. This entailed that I did not disclose the identities of the research participants during or after the study, and that I dealt with all information obtained during the research process in a confidential manner. In this regard, I excluded or changed the names in the raw data and resolved to preserve all field notes, audio and visual material, transcripts and other data in a safe environment, and to destroy them only after the stipulated time had expired. I also did not include any identifying information with regard to the exact setting and the schools in which I



conducted the study, protecting the identity and privacy of both the participants and their schools.

### **3.7.3 Protection from harm**

In order to protect participants from possible harm, I avoided or at least recognised and communicated probable risks to the participants, such as exposure to psychological, physical or social harm (Strydom 1998:33; Berg 2001:232). No participants were exposed to any physical risks or harm other than those they faced during normal daily life. I adhered to the principles of caring and fairness, as mentioned by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:422), with the intention of protecting participants from harm. I foresaw that the participants might be anxious not to be labelled as informants that divulge sensitive information with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in their schools. In order to avoid possible social harm, I assured the participants of their privacy and anonymity. I also kept in mind that dealing with HIV & AIDS as a topic might be a sensitive issue for some participants, therefore I was open and honest about the fact that we were dealing with a sensitive issue and that it must be treated as such.

### **3.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES FOR MY STUDY**

Selecting a case study design to conduct my study implies that there are certain advantages that I consider to have contributed to the significance of my study. I only focused on one case (the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme), with several participants sharing their opinions on the same programme implementation, resulting in the opportunity to gain an in-depth insight into the personal experiences and opinions of the participants (Creswell 2003:186). This created the possibility of obtaining data that are true to the lived-experiences of the participants with regard to a focus on the

implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in their schools' context. The selected activities (interviews) can also be regarded as cost-effective in terms of time, as elaborate information could be obtained within a relatively short period of time. The selected activities were not experienced as interfering with the normal activities of the institutions, as they were conducted after school hours with the intention not to disrupt and not to intrude upon the responsibilities of the participants.

In the light of my methodological choices and the consequent outcomes of my study, I am certain that the identification of contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes has the possibility of enhancing relevant curriculum development and improving curriculum delivery to learners. I believe my study contributed new knowledge with regard to the manner in which contextual factors influence the implementation and management of curricula in schools. In addition, the outcomes of this study may inform policy developers with regard to shortcomings in the current HIV & AIDS schools policy and result in the improvement of prevention programmes in schools. I am further convinced that the findings of my study will significantly contribute to the advancement of teacher training in respect of the Life Orientation Learning Area. I believe that my study has the potential to inform policy makers and persons involved with curriculum design and implementation regarding the lived-experiences of teachers and managers at school level with regard to the challenges that they experience during the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools.

### **3.9 METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF MY STUDY**

Regarding the methodology that I followed during my study, some challenges occurred. The interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, that formed the underpinning epistemology of my research, resulted in the subjective interpretation of data and consequent construction of my own subjective

understanding of the manner in which teachers gave meaning to the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme. Therefore, I cannot claim absolute objectivity regarding this study, although, being aware of this, I continuously reflected on my personal biases and prejudices, and requested clarity when uncertainties arose. I also acknowledged (as already mentioned in Chapter 1) that I am a white, Afrikaans-speaking South African male, with my own unique personality, religion, culture and life-history, that will influence the outcome of this study with respect to the possibilities of subjectivity and prejudice.

When following a case study design, the first challenge was to identify the number of schools that would be part of the data collection process. I decided to follow an instrumental case-study design, as my focus was on the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme, and not the school as such. I included three schools in order to obtain various perspectives from participants that experience different contexts with regard to the same programme, in order to obtain an in-depth and multi-faceted perspective, thereby enhancing the in-depth feature of findings, instead of merely focussing on the limited experiences in one case (school).

Initially my view was that during data collection the first language differences between myself and the participants would be a serious challenge to the study. I entered the field as a person with a cultural and linguistic background that differed from those of the research participants, and the participants also communicated through English as their second language. According to Berg (2001:58), the interviewer's language ought to be understandable to the research participants, and preferably on their level, or in their preferred language. Even though none of the participants spoke English as a first language, I decided to conduct all the interviews in English, in consideration of the fact that these were secondary schools, and English is being used as a medium of instruction. Nevertheless, I arranged for an interpreter to be

available during interviews in order to overcome this challenge and to ensure that possible doubts and uncertainties could be clarified. This was, however, not necessary, as all the discussions during the interviews went fluently and the participants were able to clarify any misunderstandings.

Another challenge of employing an instrumental case study design was that generalisations could not be made from a single or even only three case studies, and secondly, causal links were difficult to test, as they were in danger of being influenced by observer bias that could be subjective, personal, selective and presumptuous (Terre Blance & Durrheim 2002:133; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:184). I constantly reminded myself of these challenges while also keeping in mind that the focus of my data collection was to obtain an in-depth inquiry of the case, which was to identify and investigate contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools. Although more cases and a larger sample of participants normally imply a greater possibility to ensure generalisation of findings, this was not my purpose, based on the interpretivist paradigm of my study (Creswell 2003:196; Cohen *et al.*, 2003:146).

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

In view of the literature review that I undertook in Chapter 2, I planned an empirical study at three secondary schools in Soshanguve, in order to identify and investigate contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in schools. In this chapter, I concentrated my discussion on a detailed description of the research process that I followed.

I presented an exposition of my research methodology with regard to the research questions and the purpose of my study. I included a focussed discussion on the strengths and challenges that I regard significant in view of my experiences during the data collection and analyses of my study. In

addition to this, I deliberated on the manners in which I handled ethical considerations as well as my consistent efforts to enhance the trustworthiness of my study. Chapter 4 will constitute a report of the results of my study, followed by an interpretation and discussion of the findings.