

## **4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this chapter the research design used in the current study, as well as the procedures and techniques of data collection and analysis will be outlined. Fouchè (2002:271), Hagan (2000:68), Huysamen (1993:10), Marshall and Rossman (1989:78) as well as Mouton and Marais (1993:32) define a research design as “the plan or blueprint of the study”. This includes the who, what, where, when and how of the subject under study. From this it is clear that a research design is the guideline according to which a choice about data collection methods has to be made. In choosing such methods, the researcher needs to provide the reasons for the choice of such methods by detailing the advantages as well as disadvantages of each method selected (Mouton & Marais, 1993:33).

### **4.1 METHODOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION**

Hagan (2000:14) postulates that methodology entails the philosophy of the research process which includes assumptions and values that serve as a rationale for research as well as the criteria used for interpreting data.

#### **4.1.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research methodology was selected as this type of research defies clear definition and is mainly concerned with the role of interpretation. Interpretation as the core of qualitative research focuses on the meaning of human experience. The focus thus understands human experience rather than explaining and/or predicting behaviour (De Vos, 2001:80; Fouchè & DeVos, 2002:79; Marshall & Rossman, 1989:78).

Schurink (2001:240) states that in a qualitative study different techniques and data collection methods are utilised in order to “describe, observe, make sense of or interpret the phenomenon under investigation from the

perspective of the subjects". This is achieved by the interaction the researcher has with the research participants.

The choice of using a qualitative research method was influenced by two characteristics of this method identified by Fouchè and Delport (2002:79), Marshall and Rossman (1989:79) as well as Streubel and Carpenter (1999:20). The first characteristic of qualitative research is that qualitative researchers make use of multiple methods such as interviews and observation in an attempt to understand the context of what is being researched. Secondly, qualitative researchers explore the subject's or respondent's view with respect for the individual or the phenomenon under investigation. In view of the above and since the aim of the study is to explore and understand victims' experiences of rape and sexual harassment on campus, it was decided that a qualitative research methodology would be used for the current study.

According to Streubel and Carpenter (1999:20) the researcher is an important instrument in this type of research. The researcher's involvement adds quality to data collection and analysis. However, it is essential for the respondent's experiences to be reported from the perspective of the people who have lived them (Streubel & Carpenter, 1999:20). The tools and techniques employed by the researcher in order to enhance the current study are discussed below.

#### **4.1.2 CASE STUDY**

According to Groenewald (1986:9) a case study is a strategy in qualitative research that involves the description and study of a number of cases, events or phenomena. Such cases are described in terms of the factors which occur in causal relationships to each other. Robson (1993:146) also defines a case study as a strategy which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. The description of these cases usually takes place through detailed, in depth collection methods such as interviews with participants in each case (Fouchè, 2002:275). After

conducting interviews, the researcher uses the case study method known as a funnel. This case study design is described by Bodgan and Taylor (1982:59) as a method wherein the study begins wide and then narrows down to the data that is relevant to the study. The case study method best suited the purposes of the study as the research participants who were included in the study had first hand experiences of sexual harassment and rape on campus.

## **4.2 MEASURING INSTRUMENT**

Qualitative researchers are not bound by any step by step plan (De Vos, 2001:236). Research instruments are thus employed which best suit the purposes of the study. In this study, the researcher used interviews as a measuring instrument in order to solicit the rich data dealing with participants' experiences of rape and sexual harassment on campus.

### **4.2.1 INTERVIEWS**

Hagan (2000:174) describes an interview as a face-to-face situation in which the researcher orally solicits responses from subjects. In addition Berg (1998:57) defines an interview as a conversation with a purpose. This could range from in-depth interviews, lengthy interviews with one subject to fairly structured surveys of large groups. Bailey (1994:175) and Hagan (2000:174) mention that as with other techniques of data gathering, the advantages and disadvantages of interviewing as a means of obtaining information should be considered. In this regard, Hagan (2000:175) outlines the following advantages of interviews. First, an interview provides an opportunity for personal contact between the researcher and the respondent and to obtain rich data which is not always possible in the case of questionnaires. The second advantage of interviews is that because of the face-to-face relationship, an interviewer can prevent misunderstandings or confusion the research participants could have in interpreting the questions. In addition to this, probing is also possible in order to get research participants to answer in more detail and with greater accuracy (Schurink, 2001:299). Interviews also

provide an opportunity for the interviewer to observe the research participants' body language such as fidgeting with hands or clenching their fists.

Interview studies can, however, be costly when complex research requires small bureaucracies with a number of administrators, field supervisors and in some cases even public relations personnel (Bailey, 1994:175). As the study is limited to one university, the use of field workers was not necessary for the current study. Also, because of the dark figure and the fact that research participants of sexual harassment and rape are reluctant to talk about their victimisation due to the trauma they experienced, the researcher did not foresee a high response rate to the call to participate in the current study. Another reason for the anticipated low response rate is that victims of sexual victimisation often do not define what had happened to them as a crime possibly due to the relationship which existed between the victim and the perpetrator prior to the incident. In addition to this, the stigma associated with being a victim of either sexual harassment or rape might influence the victims' decision to participate in such research.

Another disadvantage of interviews includes the interview bias that can be introduced to the study when the interviewer misunderstands the research participants' answers or understands it, but makes an error in recording it or record answers when the respondent failed to reply. The problem of bias may then be introduced not only by wording, order or format of the questions, but also by the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent (Bailey, 1994:176). To overcome this, the researcher made use of tape recordings and transcribed the interviews from the tapes verbatim.

According to Bailey (1994:176) the interview also offers no assurance of anonymity. In this way the interviewer poses a potential threat to the respondent if the information is incriminating or embarrassing. In the current study, the researcher addressed this criticism by ensuring the research participants that the information provided, will only be used for research purposes. In the informed consent form (see Appendix C) it was stated that

the identity and personal information of the research participants would be kept confidential and their names would in no way be included in the research reports or revealed to anyone.

According to Hollway and Jefferson (2000:34) the interviewer sets the agenda for the interview and is guided by the interview schedule. In order to gain a comprehensive picture of female students' experiences of rape and sexual harassment on campus, the researcher used a semi-structured interview since it refrains from a structured question and answer approach. Researchers such as Greeff (2002:302) state that semi-structured interviews primarily focus on obtaining a detailed picture of the respondent's beliefs, feelings or perceptions regarding a particular topic. In addition to this, this type of interview is not fixed in its ways and the researcher can follow up particular interesting avenues that came up during the interview. Hagan (2000:174), Schurink (2001:298-299) as well as Streubel and Carpenter (1999:23) define these open-ended interviews as a social interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee with the aim of understanding the interviewees' life experiences or situations as expressed in their own words. In addition to this, a semi-structured interview also provides opportunity to conduct the interviews freely through "flexible wording, freedom in the sequence of questions as well as the amount of time the interviewer gives to each question" (Robson, 1993:227).

According to Bailey (1994:188-189) an interview schedule refers to a schedule whereby an interviewer asks questions to a respondent from a list of topics or subtopics within an area of inquiry. Berg (1998:63), Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:107) as well as Greeff (2002:302) also state that this interview schedule serves as a guideline that is compiled to guide the interviewer through the interview process. The use of an interview schedule was considered desirable in the current study since it provides clearly defined purposes during the interview. For the purpose of this study, the interview schedule (see Appendix D) was structured in the following manner:

- Biographical details  
Biographical data was included to determine the age, marital status as well as ethnic status of female students who fall prey to sexual harassment and rape on campus.
- Educational and residential status  
The purpose of exploring residential and educational status was to establish the setting where the rape and sexual harassment occurred as well as the year of study the victims were in when they were subjected to sexual harassment and rape on campus.
- Nature of the incident  
An open ended question, namely “Describe the nature of the incident” was included in the interview schedule to explore and obtain information on the research participants’ experiences and specifically the factors which made these female students vulnerable to rape and sexual harassment on campus.
- Reaction of victims and response after the incident  
A question on the reaction of others following the incident was important to determine how significant others, the University and the victims deal with the victimisation incident.
- Consequences of victimisation  
The effects of sexual harassment and rape on the victims were also included in the interview schedule.
- Prevention  
The opinions of the victims on the prevention of rape and sexual harassment on campus were also asked to obtain firsthand knowledge about their perception of prevention of similar incidents in future.

### **4.3 SAMPLING STRATEGY**

Babbie and Maxfield (1995:173) define sampling as a method of selecting some part of a group to represent the entire population. Strydom and Venter (2002:198, 209) refer to sampling as “taking a portion of that population or universe and considering it representative of that population or universe”.

#### **4.3.1 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The researcher decided to make use of a non-probability sampling technique. According to Hagan (1997:136) in non-probability sampling, the probability of selection is not known, in other words, the universum’s boundaries are not known. Due to the high dark figure associated with sexual harassment and rape on campuses (see section 2.1), the researcher decided to make use of this sampling technique. In the researcher’s search for participants, it became clear that research participants are difficult to reach as sexual harassment and rape constitute crimes that are not always reported to the police or authorities. The fact that the perpetrators are often on campus and the associated fear of being subjected to further victimisation by them, as well as the fear of not being believed also contributed to the difficulty in selecting a group of individuals to represent the “entire population”.

In the light of this, the purposive sampling technique, which is one way of doing non-probability sampling, was deemed suitable for the study. Hagan (2000:144) defines this type of sampling as a sampling procedure in which the sample is selected on the basis of one’s own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research aims. In short, purposive sampling allows the researcher to select a sample based on his or her own judgement and the purpose of the study (Babbie & Maxfield, 1995:206). Streubel and Carpenter (1999:23) also purport that this means that an interviewer is committed to interviewing individuals who had experienced the subject under investigation. The researcher decides what data are to be collected and where it should be collected. Upon collection of this data, the analysis begins until the sample is saturated and no new data develops. The end result of

which is to establish and validate the relationship between different categories and analyse and interpret these accordingly.

#### **4.3.2 COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE**

On the basis of the above discussion, the researcher gathered research participants who met the purpose of the study. At first the researcher recruited participants through the use of advertisements posted on the notice boards at the University of Venda on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2002 (see Appendix A). In the advertisements the researcher explained the aims of the study and asked research participants who have had experiences or were currently subjected to rape and sexual harassment on campus to call or e-mail the researcher. The advertisements were on notice boards after which the researcher had to replace them after every three weeks with new advertisements since the others had been removed. This continued until the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2003.

After a period of five months only one student responded to the advertisements. As mentioned earlier, this could be attributed to the high dark figure (non-reporting) associated with these crimes. Another possibility might be the fear of reliving their experiences, and as a consequence making a decision to rather refrain from participating in research of this nature. As a result of the poor response rate, the researcher decided to conduct a workshop on rape and sexual harassment of female students on campuses which took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2003 in the Auditorium of the University of Venda. To advertise the workshop, the researcher posted advertisements on notice boards with the theme as “The prevalence of sexual harassment and rape of female students on campuses” (see Appendix B). Eleven male and twenty eight female students attended the workshop. At the workshop the researcher discussed a number of aspects with the participants such as the nature (e.g. different types) of rape as well as sexual harassment in general. After the workshop, the researcher explained that she was conducting a study relating to the theme of the workshop and asked anyone who have

experienced sexual harassment and rape on campus and who would be prepared to participate in the research to contact her. Following this, fifteen research participants volunteered to participate in the study. Five of these research participants were deemed not suitable for the study and thus could not be included. Three of these female students were not raped on campus and therefore fell outside the scope of the study. Two were not the direct victims of sexual harassment or rape, but friends of victims who had since left the campus. These two participants were not included as they did not have first hand experiences of rape or sexual harassment. One was a victim of attempted rape and thus fell out of the scope of the study (see operational definition of rape, section 1.2.2).

#### **4.3.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE**

The final sample consisted of ten female students. Two of these participants had been victims of sexual harassment, while eight had been victims of different types of rape based on the prior relationship with the perpetrator. The ten female students who participated in the study were all raped or sexually harassed in the past two years (2002 and onwards).

### **4.4 THE PROCESS OF INTERVIEWING**

As mentioned earlier, the process of interviewing involves a face-to-face interaction with the research participants. The setting where the interviews took place, how the interviews were conducted, the use of probing, the research participants' behaviour during the interviews as well as the length of the interviews will be discussed next.

#### **4.4.1 SETTING FOR THE INTERVIEWS**

Given the fact that a qualitative research methodology was chosen, the place where research participants live and experience life was important to the researcher. In choosing the setting for the interviews in the current study, the researcher followed the requirements highlighted by Greeff (2002:300). This

researcher is of the view that in choosing a setting for the interviews, the researcher must consider privacy, comfort, possible threats in the environment as well as the accessibility of the venue to the participants.

The researcher conducted interviews from the 5<sup>th</sup> of May to the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2003. The researcher asked for permission from the university management to conduct the interviews after hours at the researcher's office. However, two victims indicated that they felt uncomfortable being interviewed here as the incidents took place on campus (in a lecturer's office) and some of the other perpetrators were also still on the premises of the university. The researcher therefore sought out permission from the manager of the Victim Empowerment Center in Sibasa to conduct all the interviews there. The utilisation of this Center was based on its victim friendliness as well as the fact that professional help was at hand to the victims if the need arose. This is supported by Greeff (2002:301) who mentions that if, during the interview, the participant shows any signs of "discomfort" or distress, a referral system, in the form of counselling, should be arranged for the research participant. Greeff (2002:305) justifies this by emphasising that a researcher cannot occupy simultaneous roles, that of being an interviewer and a therapist.

The researcher tried to minimise interrupting the research participants' academic schedule such as attending classes or practicals, by conducting interviews during the participants' free time. The researcher tried to ensure that the setting for interviews was convenient for the research participants and that there was minimum disturbance. This was achieved through putting a "No disturbance" sign on the door. Greeff (2002:300) also emphasises that interviews should be conducted in a "quiet" setting where there will be no interruptions.

#### **4.4.2 PROCEDURES FOLLOWED DURING THE INTERVIEW**

Due to the fact that only ten research participants were included in the sample, the researcher conducted the interviews personally. Greeff

(2002:298) refers to this procedure as one-on-one interviews in which the researcher's interest is on "understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make out of that experience". According to Neuman (1997:371) this provides the researcher with the chance to observe the respondent's behaviour as well as non-verbal communication. In this way the interviewer could follow-up on certain responses given by the research participants thereby examining underlying feelings. However, Neuman (1997:371) cautions that conducting interviews personally could be time consuming. He stated that research participants may be unwilling to provide information on certain issues, while some could divert the interview by providing irrelevant information. This therefore requires the interviewer to be patient and professional in undertaking these interviews. In the current study, the interviewer overcame this by guiding the participants, without rushing them, to the aims of the research as well as the issues under discussion.

At the start of the interview the participants were informed about the nature and aims of the study. It was also indicated as described in the informed consent form (Appendix C) that only the researcher will have access to the information and that the research will be used for scientific purposes only (such as the writing of a dissertation, the writing of articles for publication in scientific accredited journals and the reading of papers at conferences). After describing the research procedure, the researcher ensured the participants of the confidentiality of their participation in the study. This corresponds with Greeff's (2002:300) view who states that when the researcher has introduced the subject under investigation, aims as well as the procedure to be followed, the researcher should "confirm that the information is to be treated confidentially."

According to Polit and Hungler (1997:137-138) a promise of confidentiality to research participants is a guarantee that any information the participant provides will not be publicly reported or made accessible to parties other than those involved in the research. Anonymity on the other hand occurs when the researcher cannot link a participant with the data of that person. However, the

nature of the technique used to gather data, which is an interview in the current study (face-to-face interaction during the interview), made anonymity impossible. To overcome this, the researcher made every effort to ensure that confidentiality was kept. This included informing the research participants that their identities and personal information would be kept confidential and not be included in any written reports.

The researcher also addressed participants' concerns about participating in the study. Some of the concerns included whether or not the research will in any way affect their academic studies and how the researcher would deal with the information if it became apparent that the participants were victimised by members of staff. The researcher reminded the participants about the aims of the research and also the fact that their names will not in anyway be included in the writing of the research report. The researcher also ensured the research participants that no action in the form of reporting the perpetrators would be taken but that the participants would if necessary be referred for counselling. The researcher then established if they were willing to participate in the interview.

After the introductory comments about the subject under investigation, the researcher asked for permission from the research participants to record the interviews. A tape recorder is a valuable tool during interviews to improve the researcher's ability to recall the information collected during the interview (Mouton & Marais, 1991:64). Greeff (2002:304) states that the use of a tape recorder during an interview aids the researcher to be able to focus on the process of interviewing, thus observing the participants' reactions as well as their non-verbal communication. Using a tape recorder therefore helps the interviewer to record the full context of the interview. However, using a tape recorder has some limitations. One of the disadvantages relates to uncertainty of the participant about being recorded which could lead to the refusal of participation (Greeff, 2002:304). Greeff (2002:294) therefore states that the interviewer should seek permission from the participant to use the tape recorder. This requires the interviewer to clearly state the purposes of

using a tape recorder and when permission is granted, the tape recorder must be placed discreetly so that it does not interfere with the participants' participation or responses.

Nine research participants agreed that the interviews could be tape recorded. One research participant, however, feared that the cassette could be given to the perpetrator and that it would affect her academic career. The researcher reassured her that the role of the tape recorder is to gather all relevant information and to overcome the danger that important aspects of the interview may not be captured. She was also given the assurance that the information would only be used for research purposes and that the recordings (tapes) would be destroyed after the completion of the research. After this explanation, she gave consent for the interview to be recorded on tape.

The researcher used the interview schedule as a guide to frame the interview. The interviews were initiated by taking the participant's biographical details. The researcher then tried to establish a relationship (rapport) with the research participants. This was established by engaging in an informal conversation with the respondent such as asking questions about their performance in examinations. Greeff (2002:301) supports this by stating that at the start of the interview, the researcher should establish rapport. This is achieved by "listening" attentively as well as "understanding and respecting" the research participants' views.

The participants were asked about their experiences of rape and sexual harassment as well as the impact it had on them. The researcher also tried to establish how these incidents, in the opinion of the participants could be prevented on campus. At the end of the interview, the researcher enquired if the participants had received any form of counselling. Four research participants were referred for counselling and even though four of the research participants indicated that they were doing well and did not need counselling, the researcher referred them to the Victim Empowerment Center in Sibasa and the Trauma Center (one participant) in Thohoyandou. The

latter research participant was referred to the center as it was accessible and nearer to her place of residence. One research participant was already undergoing counselling at the Victim Empowerment Center.

#### **4.4.3 PROBING**

Probing involves asking follow-up questions to focus, expand, clarify or further explain the responses given by research participants (Greeff, 2002:299; Schurink, 2001:299). Mouton and Marais (1991:64) identify two major characteristics and functions of probing or follow-up questions in qualitative research. Firstly, these authors state that the function of probing is to get the respondent to answer in more detail and more accurately or at least provide a minimal acceptable answer. This means that a follow-up question could be used when the respondent hesitates in answering or gives a vague and /or incomplete answer. This is usually done when the answer to a question does not provide enough information for the purposes of the study. A second function of probing is to structure the respondent's answers and to make sure that all the topics of the research problem are covered and that irrelevant information is reduced.

In the current study probing was used primarily to focus and clarify the responses given by the participants. Two research participants were reluctant to use words such as "penis", "rape" and "sex". They preferred to use phrases such as the "thing" and "he did it." In order to validate their experiences and to reflect the incident as it happened, the researcher confirmed what happened by using the correct words. These are illustrated by means of putting the correct words in brackets in section 6.1.

#### **4.4.4 THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' BEHAVIOUR**

Interviews are important in that the researcher can observe and interpret the research participants' non-verbal responses. During the interviews one research participant started to cry uncontrollably and the researcher had to pause and switch off the tape recorder so that the participant could compose

herself. The researcher also immediately arranged counselling for the participant as it became evident that she did not receive any form of counselling and that she had not worked through the trauma. Another research participant could not sit still or concentrate as she focused on irrelevant aspects rather than the traumatic event of the victimisation. It emerged during the course of the interview that this was her way of coping with the incident. The researcher also had to stop and in most instances remind the participant about the value of her responses for the research. She was also referred for counselling.

Three research participants also asked for advice or information on how to deal with their trauma. One of the participants, who were still in a relationship with the perpetrator asked if she should end the relationship and was worried how she would survive financially if she terminated the relationship. The researcher also referred these cases for counselling. Although she explained to the latter that these decisions are not easy and that professional counselling could help her with a decision of this nature, the conversation as well as the non-verbal communication of the research participant nonetheless enabled the researcher to better understand the needs of participants (especially in terms of counselling). Greeff (2002:297) confirms that research participants often verbalise one thing (e.g. that they are doing well and coping with the victimisation incident), while their non-verbal communication such as crying contradict this (non-verbal cues are illustrated in brackets in section 6.1).

#### **4.4.5 DURATION OF INTERVIEWS**

The researcher spent between one to three hours with each participant. Two research participants (A, I) had problems expressing themselves in English and as a result these interviews took longer (see limitations in section 6.2.2). The researcher also translated some questions into the research participants' own language and made some cross-validation to ensure that the information received from research participants was correct. The researcher opted for

these long interviews of one session each because all the research participants refused to return for further interviews because it was nearing June examination time. One research participant indicated that it would be too traumatic to talk about the incident again. It was deemed therefore best to make use of the available time to finish the interviews.

## **4.5 ETHICAL ISSUES**

According to Strydom (2002:62) involvement in research requires a general awareness and acknowledgement of appropriate and inappropriate conduct. The fact that research in the human sciences requires the researchers to use human beings as their objects of study, means that the researcher should be bound by these conducts. The ethical principles that guided this study namely, informed consent, no deception, voluntary participation, non-maleficence (do no harm), no violation of privacy as well as the responsibility towards the participants will be discussed next. Counselling of participants as well as the release or publication of the research findings, will also receive attention.

- **Informed consent**

The researcher attempted to obtain informed consent through an open communication process (by reading and explaining the informed consent forms – see Appendix C). Research participation was entirely voluntary and potential participants were fully informed of the aims and processes of the research (see section 4.4.2). Since research on sensitive topics challenges the researcher and participant on many levels (Strydom, 2002:65), especially in terms of the emotional impact on the researcher and participants, participants were also informed that the interview involved the discussion of a sensitive topic and that they could decide the boundaries and parameters of the discussion. Care was also taken to establish rapport, empathy and sensitivity geared at creating an environment that was conducive to safe disclosure.

- **Voluntary participation**

Strydom (2002:65) highlights the fact that some participants may decide to participate in the research because they occupy subordinate positions to that of the researcher. The researcher was thus aware of the fact that the study required the participation of students and that her status and position is superior to them. To overcome this, the researcher did not confine participation in the study to the students in her field or faculty and participation was open to all female students at the University of Venda. It was also emphasised at the beginning of the interviews that participation is voluntary and that the research participants may withdraw from the research at any stage.

- **No deception of research participants**

Strydom (2002:66) states that qualitative researchers sometimes lie by giving wrong information about the aims or goals of the research. This is mainly done to hide what the research participants will experience when they participate in the study. The goals of the study and research procedures followed during the investigation were clearly stated during various phases of the research. Firstly, during the search for research participants, the researcher in the form of an advertisement put posters on campus which clearly stated the objectives of the study (see Appendix A). Secondly, the researcher conducted a workshop and at the end of the workshop the aims of the study as well as research procedures to be followed during the study was emphasised. Lastly, when the researcher was establishing rapport and the voluntary participation of research participants, the informed consent form which clearly stated the objectives of the study and the procedure followed during the research, were explained to research participants. The researcher also allowed the participants ample time to ask questions relating to these aspects.

The researcher also informed the research participants of the fact that the research report, would be made available to them and that they would have access to it if they wanted to verify any aspect of the research. This was done to assure that there were no hidden agendas involved in the study.

- **Non-malificence (do no harm) to research participants**

During research, research participants could be exposed to emotional or physical harm (Strydom, 2002:64). In the social sciences this harm may be of an emotional nature. The onus rests on the researcher to therefore protect the research participants from any form of harm. This requires the researcher to inform the research participants, at the start of the interview, of the possible harm they may suffer as a result of their participation in the study. In this way, the researcher offers the participants an opportunity to make their decision about participation or non-participation in the research.

Due to the sensitive nature of the study, the researcher was cognisant of the fact that some research participants could be unwilling to reveal all aspects related to their experiences. The researcher therefore informed the participants that if they felt uncomfortable or distressed by some issues, the researcher is willing to stop the interview to afford the participant time to collect herself and to continue the session at a time deemed suitable by the participant. However, even though some participants showed some signs of emotional discomfort through their non-verbal communication, the research participants wanted to continue with the interviews due to the reasons explained in section 4.4.4. The researcher also referred these participants for counselling.

- **Violation of privacy/confidentiality**

Privacy implies an element of personal privacy whereas confidentiality means that the information will be handled confidentially. Strydom (2002:67) states that the privacy of the participants could be violated if the researcher uses

tape recorders or hidden cameras without the consent of the participants. Participants' right to privacy was also respected. Before the interviews commenced, the researcher sought out permission with the participants to record the interview (see section 4.4.2). The researcher explained the role of the tape recorder to the participants. When the permission was granted, the researcher informed the research participants that the recorded information would be destroyed at the end of the study and that if they wanted, they could have access to the tapes. Research participants were also told that they could request the tape recorder to be switched off at any time during the interview.

The researcher furthermore informed the participants that they would remain anonymous to everyone but the researcher, that their identities would not be revealed and that their names or identifying details would be excluded from any reports or research documentation.

- **Responsibility towards participants**

This relates to the researcher's responsibility towards participants with specific reference to secondary victimisation if the researcher were to report this to the relevant university structures. Since one of the aims of the research is to suggest preventative measures for sexual harassment and rape on campus, the researcher decided that the research project, in the form of a dissertation would be put in the library for the university community. The university management as well as its relevant structures could therefore decide to implement the preventive measures and conduct its own investigation of the problem.

The researcher also decided that workshops would be conducted following the research in order to sensitise students, lecturers, administrative staff and management about sexual victimisation on campus. In this way, the needs and rights of the participants would not be compromised.

- **Counselling of participants**

The overall aim of any research conducted is directed towards helping the community at large. This, according to Strydom (2002:73) means that any research “is a learning curve in which both the researcher and the participant” as members of the community, gain knowledge of the phenomenon. Research participants should thus not be seen as “just subjects” for the investigation, the researcher should also provide some form of counselling and debriefing to help them deal with their experiences.

As mentioned in section 4.4.4 the researcher referred nine research participants for counselling. This was based on the views of Greeff (2002:304) who cautions that a researcher must not occupy simultaneous roles namely being a researcher and a therapist, since the goals of the research may be compromised.

- **Release or publication of the findings**

This entails the compilation of the research report that is writing down or recording the research results to make it available to other researchers as well as to the research participants. Strydom (2002:72) states that the research report must be “written clearly, objectively, unambiguously and should contain all the essential information”. Furthermore it is emphasised that sources should be acknowledged at all times to avoid plagiarism and that limitations or shortcomings should be elaborated upon.

The researcher followed all the necessary steps stipulated in the scientific research literature in order to produce a clear, simple and unambiguous research report. The shortcoming of the research will be highlighted in Chapter 6, while the list of references is provided at the end of the research report. The researcher informed the research participants that the research project would be placed in the library and at the researcher’s office for their

perusal. Fair and just research practices, with ethical concerns in mind, were thus used throughout the research process.

## **4.6 TECHNIQUES FOR ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING DATA**

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:33) notes that qualitative research involves interpretation, because nothing speaks for itself. Qualitative interpretations are not inherent in the interview texts but are constructed by the researcher. Thus, the role of the researcher as “interpreter” is significant since it should be done in such a way that the reader is able to understand the phenomenon being studied. In short, confronted with field notes, the qualitative researcher faces the task of making sense of the data gathered through the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the data collected (De Vos, 2002:340; Streubel& Carpenter, 1999:40). The aim of analysing and interpreting data in qualitative research is thus to gain insight into and understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Schurink, 2001:175).

Neuman (1997:421) states that the qualitative researcher analyses data by organising it into categories on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features. In addition to this, he also mentions that the qualitative researcher may develop new concepts, formulate conceptual decisions and examine relationships among concepts. Researchers using qualitative techniques conceptualise as they code qualitative data into conceptual categories, which in fact is already part of the data analysis process.

### **4.6.1 TECHNIQUES USED TO INTERPRET AND ANALYSE THE DATA**

A fundamental technique used in the analysis and interpretation of data in qualitative research is that of discovering the classes of things, persons and events and the properties that characterise them (De Vos, 2001:48). Streubel and Carpenter (1999:40) however, caution that during this process, researchers must keep personal biases aside throughout the investigation, especially since qualitative investigation or research such as interviews are

intense and personal in nature. To prevent the development of close relationships between participants and the researcher, these authors suggest the use of a technique called “bracketing”. This technique is defined as the process of putting aside one’s own beliefs, not making judgements about what one has observed or heard and remaining open to the data as it is revealed.

Within qualitative data analysis and to prevent the above from happening, the researcher made use of the analysing procedures identified by De Vos (2002:340). These include the collection and recording of data, managing the data, reading and memoing (writing memos), describing, classifying and interpreting and lastly representing or visualising.

The first step, namely, the collection and recording of data refers to the initial planning which includes how the data will be collected and recorded. At this stage, De Vos (2002:340) cautions that the researcher should plan ahead which instruments are going to be utilised and would be effective for collecting data and also how the researcher will “retrieve” the data gathered. He suggests that if, for example, the use of tape recorders is seen as a useful method for collecting data, the researcher should have cassettes as well as enough batteries to last the interview. The instruments used for collecting data in the current study were already described in section 4.2. The researcher made use of a tape recorder and used notes in order to be able to put together different categories for the interpretation of research results.

Managing data is the second phase in data analysis and interpretation. De Vos (2002:341) states that the researcher must be able to organise data by making it easily “retrievable”. Researchers therefore transcribe the data either by using a machine, computer or writing down by hand an entire story or sentence. The researcher managed the data in the current study by transcribing from the tape recorder the recorded information and writing it down by hand.

The third stage relates to the reading and writing of the collected data. After transferring the data from the tape recorder, the researcher read the transcripts repeatedly to familiarise herself with the gathered information. De Vos (2002:343) concurs by saying that the qualitative researcher “continues analysis by getting a feel for the whole database”.

Fourth, the researcher has to describe, classify and interpret the data gathered (De Vos, 2002:344). Thereafter, groups or meaning units are categorised into themes followed by sub-themes. As the researcher continues with the classification, new relevant information relating to the study, which may not have been covered by other researchers, could be discovered. Upon identification of such information, the researcher should interpret the data offering plausible explanations and descriptions of this information (De Vos, 2002:344). The researcher followed this procedure by categorising and classifying data that were similar or dissimilar with each other in the study. Following this, aspects for further exploration were identified.

Lastly, the researcher presents the data that was found in the text (De Vos, 2002:344). In the current study, the researcher discussed the results of the study and determined whether or not the data was useful in fulfilling the aims of the study. The researcher then summarised and linked data to the literature reviewed, the approaches and models discussed as well as the integrated model of sexual harassment and rape that was developed. In short, the whole process included studying the transcripts from the tape recordings, consolidating field notes taken during the interviews and extracting common themes in the data. This process ensured that the researcher in the current study was able to gain insight into the experiences of the ten research participants chosen for the study.

## **4.7 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the qualitative research design which was employed to collect data was discussed. The use of this design was based on the fact that its

objectives are mainly to describe, analyse and to interpret the phenomena under investigation. The researcher also used a non-probability purposive sampling technique in order to select the research participants who suited the purposes of the study. Through the use of this method, a sample of ten research participants was chosen and the method of face-to-face interviews was employed to obtain a picture of the participants' experiences of sexual harassment and rape on campus. The ethical principles that guided the study as well as the techniques for analysing and interpreting data were also addressed in the chapter. The following chapter, Chapter 5, will cover the analysis and interpretation of the data using the techniques stipulated in Chapter 4.