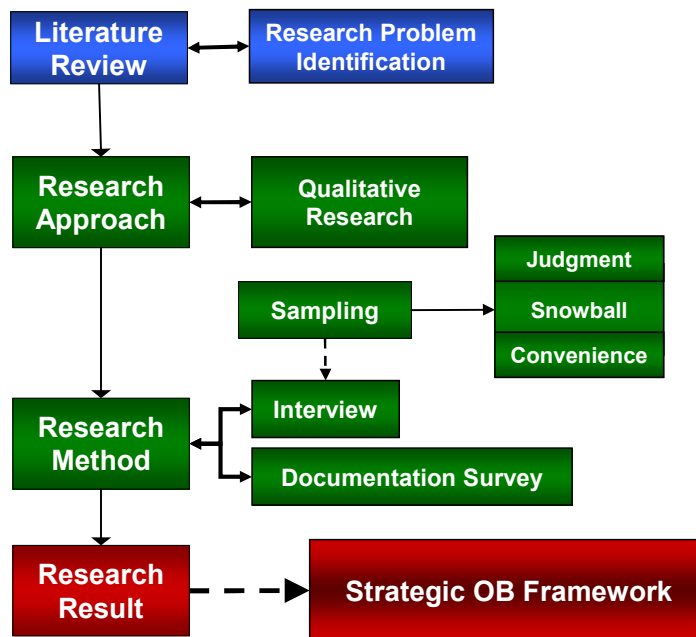


## CHAPTER 5 RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

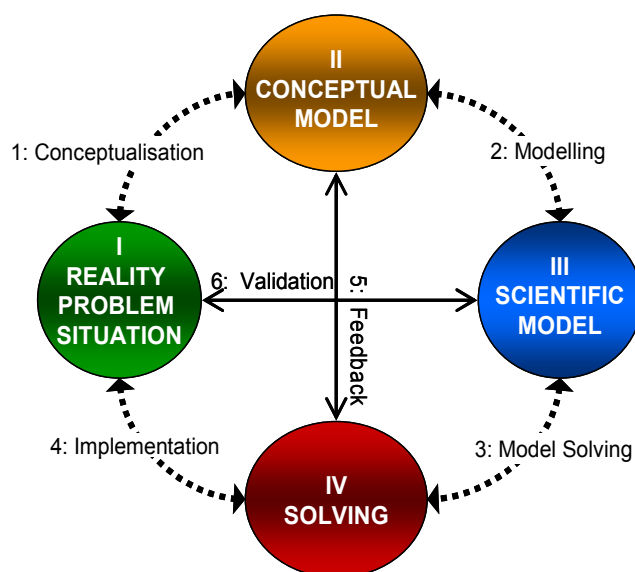
In this chapter...

### *Overview of Research Rationale:*



## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In any research the trustworthiness of the findings depends to a great degree on the methods employed to collect, analyse and interpret data. In keeping with the spirit of Organizational Behaviour, which is based on systems thinking, this research methodology is appropriately founded on the model developed by Mitroff, Betz, Pondi and Sagasti (1974:47), and is illustrated in Figure 5-1:



**Figure 5-1: Schematic Representation of the Mitroff Model**

(Adapted from Mitroff *et al.*, 1974:47)

The Mitroff model is an accepted model in Management Sciences to define the scope of research, provide guidance in structuring the research and to identify the processes and stages that should be followed. It is particularly useful in less formal and naturalistic research (Koornhof, 2001:255-257). It outlines a process for studying a phenomenon from a holistic or systems perspective. The core of the model, as depicted in Figure 5-1 above, is the four circles (Reality Problem Situation; Conceptual Model; Scientific Model and Solving) with 6 closely related activities (Conceptualisation; Modelling; Model Solving; Implementation; Feedback and Validation) which represent the activity that is related to the specific circle. As an example, the inquiry could start with circle I - the identification of an existing problem.

The first step of 'Problem Solving' would be activity 1, i.e. 'Conceptualisation', in order to develop a conceptual model as represented in circle II, which establishes the broad definition of the problem to be solved. The next step may be to perform activity 2 by developing a scientific model as is represented in circle III. The third activity may be to develop a solution (circle IV) from the scientific model if this is the definitive goal, although this may constrict research inquiry. Activity 5 requires feedback of the solution to the original problem, necessitating the implementation of the solution. Validation assesses the degree of equivalence between reality and the scientific model (Koornhof, 2001:255-257; Mitroff *et al.*, 1974:36-50).

There are two main research orientations in the social sciences: the qualitative strategy with a focus on generating knowledge; and the quantitative approach that focuses on testing theory and empirical generalisation. A qualitative methodology allows the researcher to study cases, their many variables and how they combine to produce an outcome in detail through the use of qualitative tools (Huysamen, 1994; Roberts, 2005:2; Wievoka, 1992).

As stated in Chapter 1, the main objective of this research is to develop a strategic organizational behaviour (OB) framework for the sustained effective management of South African World Heritage sites. The purpose of this chapter is to outline and describe the rationale for the proposed **qualitative research approach** in the empirical phase of the study. This chapter will support the inclusion of the study approach, design, sampling method, data collection and analysis methods that are employed. Furthermore, the issues of validity, reliability and ethics of the research process are discussed.

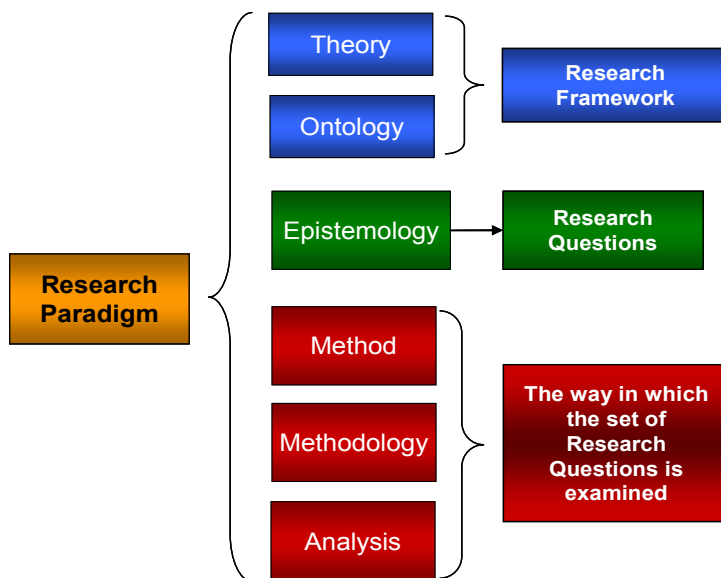
### 5.1.1 Research Approach

In order to set the stage for the research framework, it is necessary to explain the research approach - the epistemological and ontological position of this research as well as the paradigm, all of which have determined the research design and methodology followed.

According to Nel (2007) epistemology is the study of knowing, of what knowledge is and of 'how' it is possible. Ontology describes what is being researched, the natural world rather than '*how it came to be*'. He gives an excellent example to illustrate the difference in the form of a pack of wolves. The actual pack of wolves would be the natural given, the ontology. The epistemology refers to the fact that the wolves gain power from the pack, thus it refers to the reasons why the wolves form a pack. Thus ontology precedes epistemology in the sense that a target for study is identified (ontology) before one can acquire any further information from the target (epistemology). Epistemology is the philosophical theory of knowledge, the study of knowledge. Ontology is the study of the nature of being and existence. With research we create epistemological theories to support and explain the ontological observations we make.

An interpretive paradigm has been followed in this research endeavour focusing on the belief that the reality or ontology to be studied (i.e. the selected World Heritage sites) consists of subjective experiences that from an epistemological viewpoint, is intersubjective and interactional (the organizational behaviour). This requires the use of qualitative methodologies such as interviews that rely on the subjective relationship between researcher and subject in order to obtain the rich and descriptive data necessary to explain the subjective reasons and meanings behind the reality (TerreBlanche & Durrheim, 1999:6).

Nel (2007) presents a diagram (see Figure 5-2) to illustrate the generic qualitative research activities where ontology defines the research framework and epistemology determines the research questions. Ontology, epistemology and methodology define the nature of the enquiry.



**Figure 5-2: Generic Qualitative Research Activities**

(Adapted from Nel, 2007)

As a researcher I am acutely aware of the possibility of subjectivity. This research is very much an emic account. This is a double-edged sword in the sense that the interpersonal nature of conducting this type of research results in very rich and detailed information. However, there is also the danger of the researcher imposing his or her own biases onto the findings. It is thus all important for any researcher to impose not their own biases but a commitment to the truth. Nel (2007) explains that this does not necessarily imply that the research is infallible. The commitment to truth and validity is therefore not a search for infallible knowledge, but a commitment to presenting the information in an unbiased way – a commitment to the pursuit of *'the most truthful claims'*.

Ultimately, as Babbie and Mouton (2004:8) state, research can only make a valid and positive epistemological contribution if the researcher has been objective and honest in the interpretation of the information. Research is accepted to be valid if there is

enough evidence to support the fact that an accurate representation or explanation of the phenomenon being studied has been presented.

### 5.1.2 Research Objectives and Stages of Research to be Deployed

The research rationale to be used in the study is informed by the research objectives. The objectives of this research study as stated in Chapter 1 are:

- The main objective:

*To develop a strategic Organizational Behaviour framework to sustain the effective management of South African World Heritage sites.*

- The secondary objectives:

*To explore the organizational level elements necessary for the sustained strategic organizational behaviour of a World Heritage site*

*To investigate the impact of organizational behaviour on sustained destination management*

*To describe the strategic approach taken to the development and sustainability of World Heritage sites, with particular focus on the long-term vision, and strategy of the World Heritage sites*

*To examine what are the Best Practices for optimal and sustained management of South African World Heritage sites*

*To investigate the roles and contributions of the World Heritage sites' strategic stakeholders*

According to the Mitroff model legitimate research does not have to start or end at a specific point or include all the elements and activities in the model. For this thesis the research is limited to Circle I: Reality Problem Situation and Circle II: Conceptual Model, with the related Activity 1: Conceptualisation (as is shown in Figure 5-1 above).

The steps to be followed during the research design and process in this study is indicated in Figure 5-3 below. In order to address the primary research objective, namely the development of a strategic organizational behaviour framework to sustain the effective management of South African World Heritage sites, stage 3 is based on the theory of the literature review (stage 1), and the empirical findings in stage 2.

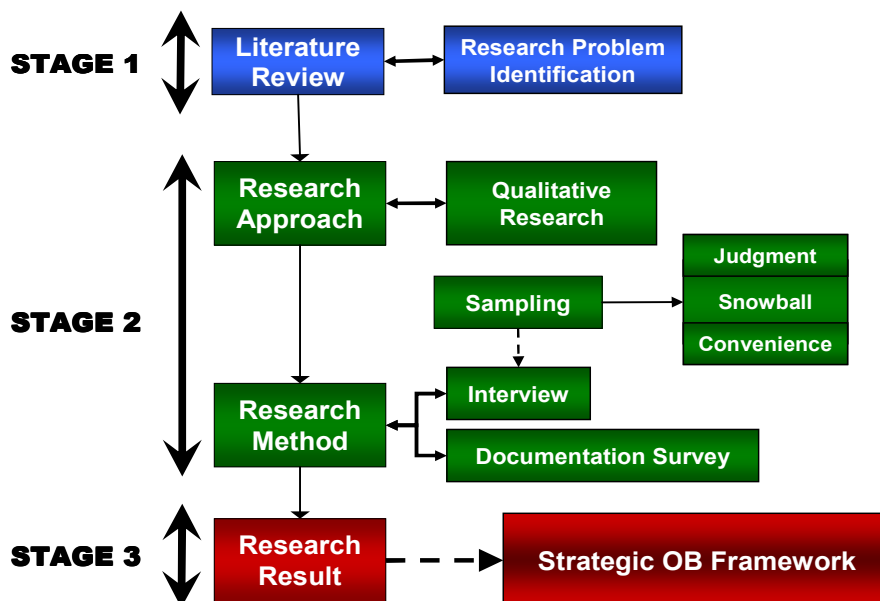


Figure 5-3: Schematic Representation of the Research Design

(Author's own)

The **research design** is the plan for accomplishing the research. It entails the orientation of the study, for example: does the study intend to test theory and hypothesis or does the study focus on building theory? According to Roberts (2005:3), the research design selected depends on the type of study, settings and goals of the study. It determines the strategy to be followed, methods of data collection, and tools to use for data analysis. The main approach of this research is

exploratory in order to build a research study and a framework. The term “exploratory research” is used because the study is evolving. It allows for familiarisation with the problem or concept being studied. Mintzberg (1979:113) observed that only qualitative research methods could provide the richness of knowledge necessary to build theory.

*Within a qualitative approach, this research study will investigate the complexities surrounding the organizational behaviour of the World Heritage sites in South Africa.*

### 5.1.3 Research Descriptors

As this research study design will involve a combination of methods for data collection and analysis, the research design’s descriptors are set out in Table 5-1.

**Table 5-1: Research Design Descriptors**

CATEGORY	OPTION
<b>Degree Of Research Question Crystallisation</b>	<u>Exploratory Study:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ scope is as yet unclear</li> <li>▪ provides significant insight</li> </ul>
<b>Method Of Data Collection</b>	<u>Interrogation &amp; Communication:</u> The researcher will question subjects and gather responses through interviews and survey of documentation.
<b>Researcher Control of Variables</b>	<u>Ex post facto:</u> The researcher has little control over variables and can only report on what is occurring.
<b>Purpose Of The Study</b>	<u>Descriptive &amp; Causal:</u> At the outset this research is <i>descriptive</i> (concerned with finding out more), however further research may be <i>causal</i> (explaining relationships).
<b>Time Dimension</b>	<u>Cross-sectional:</u> This study is carried out once in order to provide a description of the theme in a certain context.
<b>Topical Scope</b>	<u>In-depth Interview:</u> The emphasis is on a full contextual analysis of an event or condition. Highlighting the detail will provide valuable insight for evaluation, problem-solving and strategising.

(Adapted from Cooper & Schindler, 2001: 135)



*As this study is of a qualitative nature, exploratory and to a great degree descriptive, it involves a multi-perspective approach, utilising different qualitative techniques and data collection methods to understand and explain social interactions and phenomena, as indicated in Table 5-1 and Figure 5-2 above.*

## **5.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

*In this study the purpose is to gain knowledge and understanding by getting closer to the ways in which the principles of organizational behaviour are applied and managed in the selected World Heritage sites of South Africa, on an organizational level. This requires an in-depth analysis of what takes place within and around the World Heritage sites. Therefore the use of qualitative approaches becomes necessary as the focus on people's narratives will help in understanding what the organization, its endeavours, and its environment, means to them. Observation methods will help to find out how they get along with one another, and interviews with the stakeholders and staff of the organizations are important for understanding the processes employed to manage World Heritage from an organizational behaviour point of view.*

Literature shows that qualitative research can be described as a paradigm that allows the researcher the opportunity to gain an insider's perspective on social action and involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Babbie, 2002; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2; Du Plooy, 2001:29; Marshall & Rossman, 1995:1-5; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1981; Roberts, 2005:4-8). Schwartz and Jacobs (1979:7) states that the qualitative research approach focuses on understanding the subjects studied in terms of their environment as well as their own perceptions of their context. According to Wievoka (1992) this approach is used when one is interested in gaining an in-depth knowledge of specific cases and to understand how different factors piece together to influence the occurrence of the phenomena within each case. Baker (1999:8) concurs by stating that qualitative research endeavours to understand how an entire unit, such as an organization, operates on its own terms.

Creswell (1994:1) defines qualitative study as “*an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex and holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting*”. He describes the qualitative approach as one in which the researcher often makes claims based primarily on the constructivist perspective, which may be defined as “*the multiple meanings of individual experiences, socially and historically constructed meanings, with an intent to develop a theory or a pattern*” (Creswell, 2003:18). This is echoed by Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) and Henning (2004:3) who describe the main aim of qualitative research as understanding social action as opposed to merely explaining it.

Qualitative studies are those that focus on complexity or intensive research. This approach takes cases as configurations of specific aspects and features. Social phenomena are complex and are often outcomes of a combination of factors. There is no single factor or group of factors that may be isolated as contributing more than other factors to the occurrence of social phenomena. To understand social phenomena therefore, one needs to consider the combination of factors and view the outcome as resulting from many factors, rather than considering each factor in isolation (Miller & Brewer, 2003:193). Understanding and meaning are not achieved by looking at certain selected features of a phenomenon or certain instances thereof, but rather by looking at all aspects of the same phenomenon to see the interrelationships and to establish how they come together to form a whole (Henning, 2004:10).

Qualitative research as a method is ideal when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. When it is deemed desirable to learn from the experience of others, qualitative research is an excellent approach. Understanding the specific situation requires a rich appreciation of the overall context, which refers to the complex composition of people, resources, purposes, events and expectations that constitute the background of the situation. Thus knowledge is gained and meaning develops from the point of view of the participant. In the process researchers will involve

themselves directly in the setting they are studying. This is done in order to gain an appreciation of the organizational phenomena in light of the context in which they occur and with particular focus on the participants' points of view (Evered & Louis, 1981:389-390).

In the comprehensive description and analysis of a situation being studied, great attention is paid to detail in order to understand and document the relationships among circumstances, events, individuals, processes, and decisions made. The emphasis is on an extensive contextual scrutiny of a person, situation, experience, an event or condition and the applicable interrelations. Although hypotheses or research questions can be used, the reliance on qualitative data makes support or rejection less straightforward than with statistical studies. Highlighting the detail will provide valuable insight for evaluation (Cooper & Schindler, 2001:139-141).

According to Brewerton and Millward (2001:53), the research design involves the description of an ongoing event over a fixed time in the present and demands a detailed examination. In this study a cluster of South African World Heritage site organizations constitute the project, and a study is made of the strategic organizational behaviour on an organizational level, including the management and functioning of the selected World Heritage sites of South Africa. As previously stated the selected sites are the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and the Cradle of Humankind Fossil Hominid sites.

### **5.2.1 Ensuring Rigour**

Shah and Corley (2006:1829) explain that the bias towards qualitative research does not stem from the fact that it is qualitative but rather from the lack of rigour often applied to the research. When applied rigorously, qualitative research is very powerful and can provide insight beyond that to be found in quantitative methodologies. Locke (2001:59-60) suggests judging qualitative research based on the extent to which it is useful in practice, its credibility and also its contribution to theory.

As with any research there exists a need for a triangulated research strategy (Tellis, 1997). Although triangulation is typically associated with a positivistic approach and the research paradigm of this study focuses rather on an interpretive approach, it was felt that the need for triangulation arises from the ethical requirement to confirm the validity or credibility of the processes. The combination of different methods to study a problem assists in getting closer to the evidence gathered or to check the validity of the findings (Tellis, 1997). Thus, data collected from in-depth interviews would act as support for the data gathered from organizational documentation. Collaborating evidence is thus a way of getting to veritable answers as triangulation would require. Triangulated research offers the promise of getting closer to the entirety of a case in a way that a single method could not achieve. The principle of triangulation advocates the use of as many different sources of information as is possible, such as observations, interviews and documentation. The aim is to obtain convergence on an issue by addressing the complexity and diversity of the issues at hand (Brewerton & Millward, 2001:55).

Qualitative research is often criticised because the results are supposedly not widely applicable in real life. Yin (1994) has contested this criticism by presenting an explanation of the difference between analytic generalization and statistical generalization. He advocates using previously developed theory in analytic generalization, as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the study. Incorrect terminology such as a "*small sample*" is used, as though such a study were a single respondent. This inappropriate manner of generalization assumes that some sample of cases has been drawn from a larger set of cases.

Consideration must be given to the protection of validity and reliability. In achieving this, systematic methods and procedures as described below are employed. Levy (1988) established construct validity and internal validity using the research study explanatory design. Yin (1994) suggested using multiple sources of evidence as the way to ensure construct validity. This study of the World Heritage sites will use multiple sources of evidence such as interviews and documents. Internal validity can

be ensured by the specification of the unit of analysis, as the theories are developed and data collection and analysis test those theories. External validity is more difficult to attain and Yin (1994) contends that external validity could be achieved from theoretical relationships and that it is possible to make generalizations from these relationships. Qualitative research makes no claims of generalizability but rather that transferability is a possibility. The development of a formal study protocol provides the reliability or dependability that is required of all research.

Constas (1992:264) explains that the integrity of qualitative research lies in the objectivity of the research in that it is open to criticism and scrutiny. A well designed study can provide important insight into theory and provide new constructs, while also adhering to strict guidelines for rigour. According to Kerlinger (1986) qualitative research does not necessarily entail a set of absolute standards but rather a process of category development. As such, exploratory qualitative study has a valuable role to play in scientific research.

### **5.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research**

In order to determine the appropriateness of qualitative research methodologies for this research, the advantages and disadvantages are identified. Maxwell (1996:17) points out the advantages of the qualitative method over the quantitative method, in the sense that the qualitative method focuses on specific situations or people and it emphasises words rather than numbers. He argues that the research context sets the strategy and develops further as the event unfolds. The study helps the investigator “*to understand the meaning of the situation*” because the people being studied are allowed to attach meaning to their situation through their own story.

In a qualitative study one is not only interested in the events that take place but in how the participants in the study make sense of the events and how this influences their behaviours. A researcher is allowed to understand a situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomena. A further advantage is that qualitative research allows the researcher to view behaviour in natural surroundings without the

manipulation of experimental research. Also, qualitative research intensifies depth of understanding and these methods are flexible as opposed to the more strictly formalised methods of experimental research (Dillon, Madden & Firtle, 1993:130; Du Plooy, 2001:33; Wimmer & Dominick, 1983:49).

Qualitative research has disadvantages such as the issue of sample size and reliability. According to Dillon *et al.* (1993:131) as well as Wimmer and Dominick (1983:49) sample sizes are often too small to allow the researcher to generalise beyond the sample selected for the specific study. Therefore, qualitative research is often conducted in order to enlighten and operationalise concepts as a precursor to quantitative research. As regards reliability, this can be difficult to prove since single observers are describing unique events in which they often become closely involved.

*For this study the advantages of qualitative research outweigh the disadvantages, as it is important to use a methodology that will be flexible and increase the depth of understanding of the phenomenon, since the purpose is the development of a strategic OB framework for possible implementation in the South African World Heritage sites.*

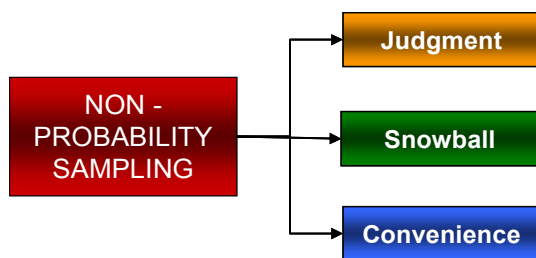
### **5.3 SAMPLING DESIGN**

The procedure, by which a few subjects are chosen from the research universe to be studied in such a way that the sample can be used to estimate the same characteristics in the total, is referred to as sampling. The sampling of situations, sites and participants for qualitative research is usually not done in the same way as for quantitative research. In qualitative research, participants and events are selected for their unique ability to explain, understand, and yield information about the meaning of a situation. This is called theoretical sampling. Purposive samples can also be chosen to yield maximum information related to specific issues (Vockell, 1993).

### 5.3.1 Non-Probability Sampling

A critical consideration in determining a study’s methodology is the selection of subjects. Non-probability sampling techniques are used as the aim of the study is to research individuals, groups and setting where the specific phenomenon being studied is most likely to occur. When one case is being studied it is unlikely that the case has been chosen randomly (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2002).

In non-probability sampling, the chance of the sample being selected from each unit within the population or universe is unknown. The researcher relies on experience and judgement and as a result the selection of the subjects is arbitrary or subjective. There are no statistical techniques that allow for the measurement of sampling error. It would thus be inappropriate to project the sample characteristics to the population. Qualitative research relies heavily on non-probability sampling techniques.



**Figure 5-4: Sampling**

(Author’s own)

As shown in Figure 5-4 above, the selection of the respondents for this study is based on three types of non-probability sampling: *judgement*, *snowball* and *convenience sampling*. In judgement sampling, the researcher and other subject matter experts use their judgement in identifying subjects from the population for study, who may be subject matter experts based on the population’s parameters. With snowball sampling respondents enable the collection of data from other respondents who have the same common ground. In convenience sampling, the selection of units from the population is based on availability and accessibility. The major disadvantage of this technique is how representative the information collected about the sample is to the population as a whole. But the information could still

provide very significant insights, and be a good source of data in exploratory research (Cooper & Schindler, 2001:192; Emory & Cooper, 1991).

### **5.3.2 Target Population and Sample**

The target population is defined as “*the aggregate of all the cases that conform to some designated set of specifications*” (Tudd, Smith & Kidder, 1991:130). According to Mouton (1996:134) “*the population is a collection of objects, events or individuals that have some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying*”.

I plan to interview key strategic representatives from South Africa’s World Heritage sites as well as knowledgeable role-players from the government and UNESCO, in order to ensure the representation and validity of the data gathered. A concerted effort was made to conduct interviews with representatives from various stakeholder groupings in an effort to get a more unbiased and representative examination of the research from different viewpoints in order to offer a more valid and truthful presentation of the phenomenon being studied.

In order to achieve the above I felt it necessary to attempt to select individuals that would be able to represent a range of different viewpoints from different organizational or stakeholder groupings. Preference was given to individuals who have been given the authority to represent these groups. This research will therefore focus on individuals who are strategic key role players or stakeholders from the following organizations, institutions and groups:

- UNESCO, as the international institutional body responsible for World Heritage. This was accomplished by interviewing a high-ranking representative of UNESCO’s National Commission in South Africa;
- The South African government, in particular the Department of Environment and Tourism who is the government department directly involved with the application for World Heritage status by South African sites;
- Representatives from World Heritage sites. An attempt was made to conduct



interviews with representatives from all levels of stakeholders within the selected World Heritage sites such as the management authorities, the local community, residents, land owners and business owners;

- Tourism industry experts who have significant knowledge of the selected sites, as tourism is a key economic driver for these sites and since inscription and World Heritage status leads to a significant increase in visitor numbers.

The individuals with whom interviews were conducted will be described in more detail in the following chapter.

#### **5.4 DESIGNING THE RESEARCH METHOD PROTOCOL**

Tellis (1997) and Yin (1994) recommend the development of a research study protocol, i.e. guidelines or rules for use in the specific circumstances. This stage is composed of two steps, namely determining the required skills, as well as developing and reviewing the protocol.

It is necessary for the researcher to possess skills that include the ability to be a good listener and ask worthwhile questions. The researcher must be able to interpret the responses and be flexible enough to react to changing circumstances. The researcher must have a firm understanding of the issues being studied, and must strive not to be biased by preconceived ideas (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Yin, 1994). This researcher has had experience in the various techniques and methods that is used in this study and is adequately prepared for the investigation.

An empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context is one situation in which research study methodology is especially applicable (Tellis, 1997). Yin (1994:20) cautioned that the research questions determine the relevant strategy to be used. In the current study, the nature of the questions leads to an exploratory research study. An exploratory study need not have a proposition. The unit of analysis in a research study could possibly be an individual, a community, an

organization, a nation or even a civilization (Sjoberg, Williams, Vaughan, & Sjoberg, 1991). In this study the units of data collection are the significant role-players of the World Heritage sites on a strategic level and the units of analysis are the selected World Heritage organizations.

#### **5.4.1 Data Collection**

When conducting this research study there are three tasks that must be carried out for successful data collection. Firstly, it is necessary to prepare for the collection of data; secondly, to survey the organizational documentation; and thirdly, to conduct the interviews (Yin, 1994). Once the protocol has been developed, the second phase, i.e. the execution of the plan can commence. In this phase the primary activity is that of data collection. In case studies, data collection really is a design issue and can improve the construct and internal validity of the study, as well as the external validity and reliability (Ragin & Beker, 1992; Yin, 1994).

This process of research leads to the generation of knowledge or refinement of theory. It is referred to as Grounded Theory, because it is generated from the data rather than developed first and then tested through the collection of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Shah and Corley (2006:1827) describe a key feature of Grounded Theory as the gaining and discovery of knowledge through direct contact with the world. An additional and very important factor is that the researcher should be very knowledgeable about the existing theories but should not allow preconceived ideas to guide data collection.

There are various sources of evidence when conducting qualitative in-depth research. Grounded theory favours data collection methods that will aid in gathering rich data directly from people who have experienced the phenomenon under scrutiny (Shah & Corley, 2006:1828). It is not essential to use all the sources in every research study, but the importance of utilising multiple sources of data to secure the reliability of the study is well established (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). According to

Evered and Louis (1981:388-390) knowledge and understanding of an organizational situation can be acquired by studying data generated by the organization, thus looking at the organizational situation from the outside, as well as by becoming a part of the organization and studying it from the inside. Inquiry from the inside assumes that the researcher must become immersed in and become a part of the phenomena being studied. The underlying epistemological belief is that knowledge is gained by human experience, which is inherently continuous and not necessarily logical and thus quantifiable.

Along with the secondary research conducted during the literature review, I will question subjects and gather responses through in-depth interviews as well as contextual analyses of the situations through a documentation survey. This will result in obtaining detail that will provide valuable insights for evaluation, problem solving and strategising in order to devise a Strategic Organizational Behaviour Framework to sustain the effective management of World Heritage Sites in South Africa. No single source has advantage over the others and they could be used in complement (Tellis, 1997).

Table 5-2 on the following page highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of the types of evidence used in this study:

**Table 5-2: Types of Evidence**

EVIDENCE SOURCE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<b>In-depth Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-depth interviews are targeted and focuses on specific topics;</li> <li>▪ Insightful – provides perceived causal inferences;</li> <li>▪ There is a high question completion rate;</li> <li>▪ The line of questioning can be tailored as interview progresses;</li> <li>▪ Respondent is motivated by high value placed on responses due to personal contact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-depth interviews are time-consuming and the most expensive method of data collection;</li> <li>▪ Response bias;</li> <li>▪ Incomplete recollection or fatigue of respondents can be problematic;</li> <li>▪ Reflexivity – interviewee expresses what interviewer wants to hear.</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation &amp; Archival Records</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documents are stable i.e. they can be used for repeated review;</li> <li>▪ Documents exist prior to the research study, are thus unbiased and unobtrusive;</li> <li>▪ Broad coverage over extended time span;</li> <li>▪ Precise and quantitative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difficult retrievability or access to documentation;</li> <li>▪ Biased selectivity of the researcher can lead to only certain documents selected;</li> <li>▪ Reporting bias can occur which reflects author bias;</li> <li>▪ Access to documentation may be blocked by governing bodies.</li> </ul>

(Adapted from Patton, 1990: 288; Van Vuuren, Maree & De Beer, 1998: 406; Yin, 1994:80)

Several disadvantages exist for the types of evidence used in this study as is seen in the above table. In terms of the in-depth interview, the interviews have no financial implications for the interviewees. For the interviewer there will be significant costs involved in terms of fuel and accommodation costs to attend interviews, as well as time spent preparing. Although in-depth interviewing as a method is time-consuming, the interviews are not long enough for the interviewees to become fatigued (approximately an hour in length). It is conceivable that due to the tailoring of questions as the interviews progressed, certain topics may have been omitted unconsciously. In terms of the documentation and records survey, it could be argued that key documents may be withheld without the researcher being aware of this.

#### **5.4.1.1 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews are a major form of data collection in qualitative research. The richness of the responses in both breadth and depth can add noticeably to the understanding of the complexities of the case (Yin, 1994). Interviews are important sources of information when it is essential to explore a subject in detail or probe for underlying attitudes and feelings. In qualitative research, the interviewer is often shopping for information but is not totally certain what that information may be; neither is he or she knowledgeable about the aspects and topics relating to the social group that the informant has knowledge of (Vockell, 1993). The interviewer intends to collect detailed, richly textured information (Kaufman, 1994:123).

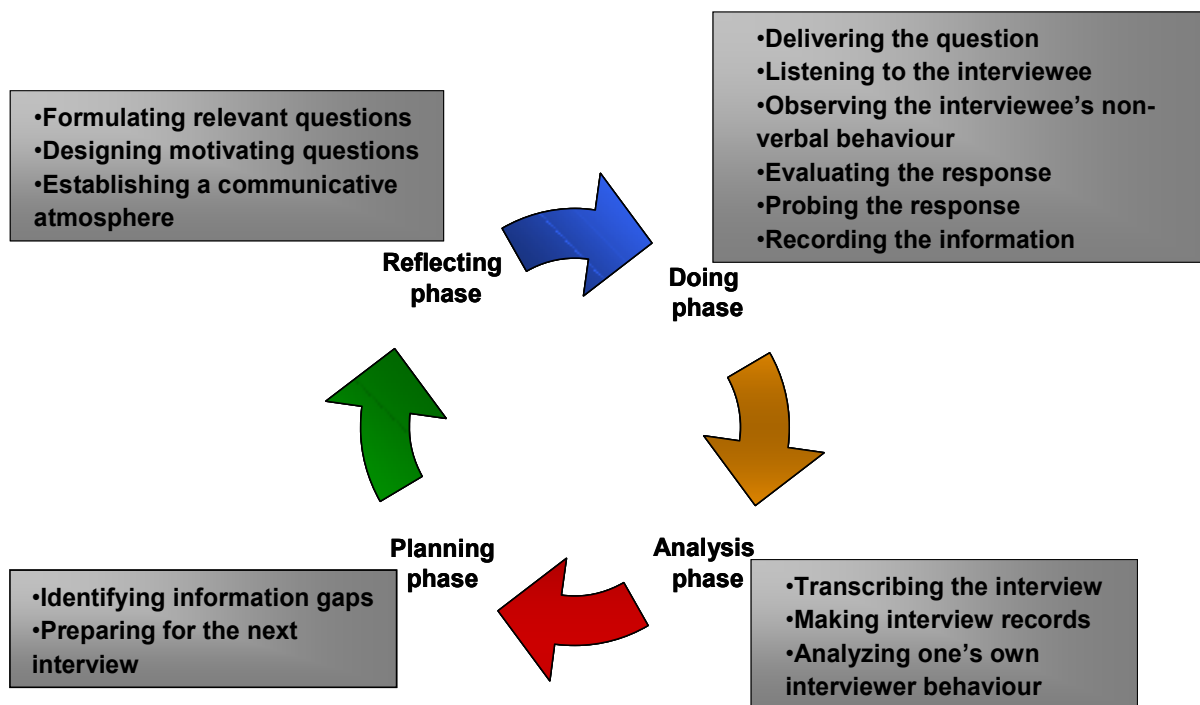
In-depth interviews are very intensive and less structured than a standardised interview or questionnaire (Van Vuuren *et al.*, 1998: 410). Berg (1998:61) states that the researcher opens a dialogue with an interviewee and engages that person as a human being, not as a study subject. Therefore, the interviewer does not use a structured interview template but rather an interview schedule with an open format. The aim is to elicit subjective idiosyncratic responses that allow for deeper understanding. According to Kaufman (1994:125) an open-ended format allows the researcher to follow up with probing questions in order to explore and deepen the response to the question, thus increasing the richness of the data obtained.

Interviews are conducted with influential stakeholders of the selected World Heritage sites. Stakeholders are asked to participate by endorsing an Informed Consent form. The interviewee's anonymity is assured if so requested and I will explain that they have been chosen because they are significant role-players and thus have insight, observations and opinions about the organizational behaviour of the South African World Heritage sites.

In-depth interviews are conducted in person, according to the interviewee's schedule and availability, as suggested by Feagin *et al.* (1991). The interview tone should be cordial, supportive and non-threatening. The interview will be recorded with a digital

electronic audio recorder (Sony Digital Voice Recorder ICD-MX20), and a transcript made, in order to facilitate record keeping. An interview schedule (see APPENDIX A) will act as a guide to ensure that all aspects of the topic have been covered, but significant freedom is taken to explore, elaborate on, or explain answers if it is thought to be fruitful. Interviews are semi-structured and in order to gain a deeper understanding of the whole situation, structured questions are sometimes followed with probing questions. The probing technique allows respondents to create meaning from their own perspective. This could generate more ideas and richer evidence about the research question.

The process followed will be that suggested by Reysoo and Heldens' Interview Cycle (2007), as is illustrated below, when conducting interviews:



**Figure 5-5: The Interview Cycle**

(Adapted from Reysoo & Heldens, 2007)

Interviewer bias could be considered the greatest disadvantage of face-to-face interviews in this study, as the interviewer could have influenced the responses unknowingly in some way. However, I will take care to be wary of this fact, as well as remaining cognisant of other common mistakes made during the interview process

according to Reysoo and Heldens (2007), which are:

- asking long, complicated questions so that the participant is lost in verbal barrage;
- asking yes/no questions or closed questions that can be answered in a word or two;
- asking vague, general questions, rather than focusing on specific details of events and experiences;
- asking leading questions based on own theories, beliefs and assumptions;
- failing to ‘read between the lines’;
- failing to recognise the need to probe;
- probing too much (interrupting the interviewee’s train of thought);
- using too much topic control;
- loading or leading the questions.

The strategy of naturalistic interviewing is to keep the interviewees talking and to express interest in what they have to say. The interviewer should not indicate either approval or disapproval. It is important to probe to obtain more detailed information, but if it is necessary to interrupt, this is done gracefully. The interviewer should endeavour to reduce personal reactions and interventions to a minimum (Vockell, 1993).

#### **5.4.1.2 Documentation and Archival Records**

Documents can include either current information (e.g. public relations communications) or archival information (e.g. newspapers and yearly reports). Archival documents are often valuable even though they may have errors and could well be incomplete. The study will collect existing secondary data since documentary sources provide a rich source of data and information in organizational research (Roberts, 2005:25). In order to understand the way organizations do their work it is important to look at their various documents, which may include yearly reports, policies and procedure reports. Other sources of information may include studies carried out by others or commissioned studies by the organization itself.

Organizational reports are important sources of information and can be used to triangulate and support the data collected from direct interviews. The source of the documentation and archival data consists of various records in the public domain such as research articles and annual reports. The sampling method followed involved obtaining and studying documentation relating to the management of South African World Heritage sites, including:

- the annual reports of selected sites;
- official promotional material;
- the documentation used for applying for inscription on the World Heritage list of both of iSimangaliso and the Cradle of Humankind;
- relevant newspaper articles relating to issues impacting on the management of iSimangaliso and the Cradle of Humankind

However, access to material is not always problem-free. Often officials who are the gatekeepers to the organization may hinder access to the organization (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhil, 1997:166). I experienced the problem of restricted access to information at iSimangaliso Wetland Park where my efforts to gain access to documentation were blocked and as a result I had to gain access to the documentation through the public domain and through relevant stakeholders.

#### **5.4.1.3 Audit Trail**

Heath (1997) recommends keeping track of the research process through various means which is employed in this study. A major problem with qualitative data collection is remembering the data long enough to record it. To counter the loss of any data several techniques are employed (Bernard, 1988; Heath, 1997). These include:

- Instrument development: information such as revisions of interview questions.
- Field notes: taken whenever I observed or heard something important. They were written on the spot to avoid the problems of forgetfulness and selective



memory. Field notes can also include summaries of field data collected during the day or over another designated period of time supplemented by all the other information collected, including recordings, documents, and notes about the overview and understanding of the social scene as the researcher sees it at that time.

- Analytic notes: the result of my conceptualisations of how the World Heritage sites function and are organized. They result from careful examination of the field notes, jottings and logs and explore broad, speculative explanations, organizing principles, and concepts that explain and give structure to the many observations and data that are contained in the field notes.

#### **5.4.2 Data Analysis**

By following a constant comparative method and applying content analysis to examine data and refine theory, a strategic Organizational Behavioural framework will be produced from the research study data. The constant comparative method can be described as the process by which meaning is created and assigned from the observations recorded in the data. It is an iterative process of identifying and comparing incidents, distinguishing and integrating categories, and focusing on and writing theory (Shah & Corley, 2006:1828).

Analysing the research study evidence comprises the examination, categorization and tabulation of the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study (Yin, 1994). The analysis of qualitative research study evidence is one of the least developed aspects of the research study design. The researcher needs to rely on experience and the literature to present the evidence in various ways, using various interpretations because statistical analysis is not necessarily applicable in all cases. One of the main ways to analyse documents and other qualitative data is through the process of content analysis, whereby the researcher looks for themes or concepts in the natural language. Variables can be both conceptually and operationally defined, as well as illustrated with examples from the documents themselves (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Vockell, 1993).

In quantitative research the researcher typically preselects a set of categories that will guide the inquiry. Hypotheses are phrased in terms of these categories, and only the data pertaining to them are collected. With qualitative research analysis there are no intentionally prescribed categories. Instead, important features emerge, are noticed and identified through an interpretive, iterative process. This exploration is suited to generating categories grounded in the circumstance of a particular situation or phenomenon and to build theory. Emergent categories may later be used to guide hypothesis-testing in the case of quantitative research (Evered & Louis, 1981:389).

Constas (1992: 257-261) identifies a number of components that can be utilised when developing categories. Firstly, *origination* identifies the locus of category construction, as for example using the participant as a point of origination, where the participant identifies categories, or possibly refers to literature to recognise categories. Secondly, *verification* involves the strategy used to support the creation or application of a certain category and provides the grounds for justification for the creation of a particular category. Thirdly, nomination is concerned with naming categories. The particular name given by the researcher to a category can raise an impression of certain knowledge. Lastly, *temporal designation* addresses the time at which categories were assigned. Often categories are created on an iterative basis at various points in the research and are refined as the process progresses.

There are certain aspects that the researcher has to take care of to ensure that the analysis is of high quality. This includes showing that all relevant evidence is used, that all rival explanations are used, that the analysis addresses the most significant aspect of the research study, and that the researcher's knowledge and experience are used to maximum advantage in the study.

*The analysis of data will be done in the following manner:*

- Firstly, qualitative responses are analysed progressively as data collection progresses. This progressive analysis of qualitative data at each stage of data collection is important in helping to refine the research question;

- Secondly, qualitative data is analysed to generate quantitative data where applicable. Interviews are content analysed for different themes and these themes are analysed;
- Lastly, the results from this analysis are used to construct meaning and connections.

The theoretical and research study data will be analysed drawing on a Grounded Theory approach, which strives to construct conceptual frameworks directly from data rather than from pre-established assumptions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process that is followed during this study involves reflective and structured recording of data, and on the basis of the data, making interpretations of it, imposing a meaningful structure, developing variables, and finally presenting an understanding of the phenomenon with which they have been involved (Vockell, 1993). This constant comparative method involves looking for patterns of data and variables in field notes and developing constructs that account for these patterns, comparing them with each other, and redefining and reconceptualising them into more coherent variables and patterns (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Ragin, 1987; Reed, 2004:403 – 404).

The constant comparative process followed in this study consists of the following steps:

- 1) Information, events, and incidents applicable to each category are compared, resulting in the generation of theoretical characteristics and properties for each specific category.
- 2) Categories and their properties are integrated. Coding is continued and as different categories or themes emerge, new events are constantly compared with the properties of the various categories leading to the development of the framework. Denzin and Lincoln (1998:180) explain that coding, finding themes and clustering are all methods of data selection and reduction.
- 3) The emerging framework is delimited. Demarcation will take place both at a theoretical and categorical level. As the researcher's analysis and coding become more focused, the original list of categories is reduced. As the

researcher compares new incidents of a category to its properties and finds no deviation, major modifications become fewer. In addition, the list of categories can be further delimited by theoretical saturation, which means that no additional data could be found whereby the researcher can develop properties of the category.

4) Lastly, the theory will be written up.

In conclusion, this analysis phase will involve a repeated, careful examination and consideration of all the data combined with my insights. The field data will be converted into categories and relationships through a process of multiple readings, and sorting multiple sources of records into sections relating to such aspects as themes, concepts, individuals, groups, and scenes. Data is pieced together to help determine patterns. A search is made for key links that combine data related to the same event, person, or scene. The whole process of interpretation and explanation is one of pattern analysis, and the attempt is to bring together as many items of data as possible into a meaningful whole. The aim is to prove that sufficient evidence exists to support the framework, and that the patterns of evidence exist and that the conceptual explanations are indeed valid (Vockell, 1993).

### **5.4.3 Developing Conclusions and Recommendations**

The end result of the analysis process should be a logical and compelling description of key constructs, the relationships among them, and the contextualization of the findings (Glaser, 1994). In this phase a message is produced to communicate the data, findings and a broad, deep understanding of the context of the research study. The report has to meet technical requirements in that it must present the organized data and the relationships among the variables that the data represent, as well as the evidence that supports the ultimate assertions. The links between the concrete data and the abstract concepts must be made clear and this will satisfy the informational needs of a study (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

The reporting aspect of a research study is perhaps most important from the user's viewpoint. It is the link between the user and the researcher (Tellis, 1997). A well designed research project that is not well explained to the reader will cause the research report to fall into disuse. In this section, the researcher will come to conclusions as well as make recommendations and highlight implications based on the evidence. The researcher must refrain from jargon and give clear explanations. Those explanations are necessary to help the user understand the implications of the findings. According to Shah and Corley (2006:1830) the potential for qualitative research to provide important theoretical insights is very strong and when done rigorously and reported clearly and concisely, qualitative research is a powerful tool for management researchers.

## **5.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The manner in which the researcher will conduct the interviews and analyse the data is in accordance with ethical research procedures and guidelines. All respondents will complete an Informed Consent Form (APPENDIX B), acknowledging their understanding of the research process, their willingness to participate, and consenting to the use of data/information for the research. All possible steps have been taken to ensure the anonymity of the participants and the safekeeping of data and records.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the rationale for research to be followed in the empirical phase of this study. It is most useful to examine the World Heritage sites in the context of Organizational Behaviour utilising a qualitative research approach and design in order to gain greater insight into how the organization functions, as well as the benefits of strategic OB for heritage organizations.

Chapter 6 will examine the research methodology and processes used to realise the research objectives, based on the rationale provided in this chapter. It will include a detailed description of the method followed and all practical experiences encountered. The results derived from the analysis of the data and accompanying explanations of the meaning will follow in the subsequent chapter. In this way both technical requirements and the informational needs, as mentioned previously, will be met.

## CHAPTER 6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter...

*Overview of Research Methodology:*

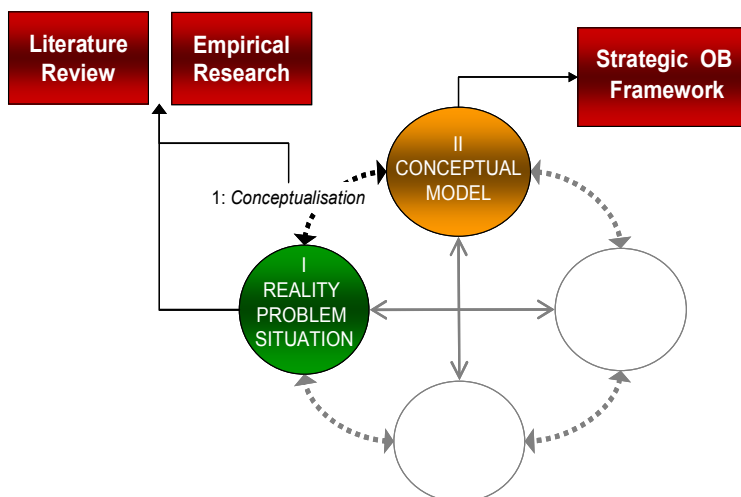


## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the rationale for the proposed research approach in the empirical phase of the study was described. The current chapter concentrates on the application of the research methodology through a discussion of the method followed as well as the interview process, questions and results.

The Mitroff model forms the basis for this research process. The model is used for problem solving in systems thinking and was thought to be of particular applicability given the suitability of the systems approach to the field of Organizational Behaviour (OB).

As is indicated in Figure 6-1 the steps followed during the methodological phase of this research study, were grouped within 3 stages based on the Mitroff model. The inquiry started with Circle I, which involved the identification of the research problem through a literature review. This was further refined with the empirical research with Activity 1 'Conceptualisation' in order to develop a model (or in this case a framework) in Circle II.



**Figure 6-1: The Applied Mitroff Model**

(Author's own, adapted from Mitroff *et al.*, 1974:47)



The research process was divided into three stages:

1. The **first stage** involved a detailed literature review, as discussed in chapters two, three and four, in order to explore and investigate the concepts that formed the bases of the secondary research objectives. As discussed previously these included an overview of World Heritage and the specific selected sites in South Africa; Best Practices in World Heritage; and the strategic Organizational Behaviour (OB) elements such as organizational design; organizational dynamics; and the strategic stakeholder relationships that impact on organizations such as World Heritage sites.
2. **Stage two** ascertained by means of in-depth interviews the state of OB and related issues at the selected World Heritage sites in South Africa. In-depth interviews were specifically chosen for their value in allowing for probing and adding value in terms of richness of information.
3. The **third and final stage** of the research consisted of the development and presentation of a strategic OB framework to sustain the effective management of South African World Heritage sites. This framework will be presented in chapter 7.

## 6.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfil the **main purpose** of this research study, i.e. *the development of a strategic OB framework to sustain the effective management of South African World Heritage sites*, several secondary research objectives (as discussed in Chapter 1) were addressed.

In order to address the secondary objectives as mentioned above I followed a qualitative research approach. This approach was chosen for several reasons, many of which have been mentioned in chapter 5; however, most notably it was chosen

because of its ability to provide richness and depth of understanding that I found very attractive. Constas (1992:254) states it most eloquently by saying that with qualitative research “*that which is subtle becomes obvious... the invisible becomes visible. Veneers of phenomenological representation are removed so that we may become acquainted with subjective understanding and the meaning of human interactions*”.

As well as a comprehensive literature survey, I chose in-depth interviews as the primary data gathering instrument. A criticism of qualitative research and the interview methodology is the probability of subjectivity and bias of the researcher. Although remaining non-judging, I made a point of showing empathy and understanding, which is felt aided in establishing rapport with interviewees. By following a rigorous methodological approach whilst collecting and interpreting data, subjectivity and bias have been minimised.

The benefit of this type of research approach is the chance to probe and to reflect. Qualitative research is only as good as the researcher and the researcher should have or should develop skills such as the ability to ask the right questions and to interpret the information (Morse, 1994; Yin, 1994). The questions asked in the interview schedule were based on the secondary research objectives and the theory explored in the literature review.

Table 6-1 illustrates the interview discussion topics and questions as they relate to the relevant secondary research objectives.

**Table 6-1: Interview Questions and Related Objectives**

<b>SECONDARY OBJECTIVES</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b><i>To explore the organizational level elements necessary for the sustained strategic organizational behaviour of a World Heritage site.</i></b>
<b>Research Questions</b>	<p>1.1 What are the factors that may influence sustainability and growth of South African World Heritage sites?</p> <p>1.2 What are the organizational level elements and dynamics that need to be included in a strategic OB framework for a World Heritage site?</p> <p>1.3 What are the organizational level elements and dynamics that influence the sustainability of World Heritage sites?</p>
<b>2</b>	<b><i>To investigate the impact of organizational behaviour on sustained destination management.</i></b>
<b>Research Question</b>	<p>2.1 What is the impact of OB on sustained destination management?</p>
<b>3</b>	<b><i>To describe the strategic approach taken to the development and sustainability of the World Heritage sites, with particular focus on the long-term vision and strategy the World Heritage sites.</i></b>
<b>Research Questions</b>	<p>3.1 What is the flow from strategy to structure in World Heritage sites?</p> <p>3.2 Describe the strategic approach to be taken to the development and sustainability of the World Heritage sites, with particular focus on the long-term vision and strategy of the World Heritage sites.</p> <p>3.3 What are the processes for implementing sustainable OB management?</p>
<b>4</b>	<b><i>To examine the best practices for optimal and sustained management of South African World Heritage sites.</i></b>
<b>Research Question</b>	<p>4.1 How should the organizational behavioural dynamics of World Heritage sites be managed in the South African World Heritage sites for optimal and sustained performance?</p>
<b>5</b>	<b><i>To investigate the roles and contributions of the strategic stakeholders of the World Heritage sites.</i></b>
<b>Research Questions</b>	<p>5.1 What are the roles and contributions of the stakeholders of the World Heritage sites to the management, functioning and sustainability of the organization?</p> <p>5.2 What are issues and elements that influence stakeholders' perceptions positively and negatively with regard to the management, functioning and sustainability of the organization?</p>

(Author's own)

A survey of relevant documentation was also conducted using convenience sampling, which provided a fruitful source of primary information regarding the World Heritage organizations. It included documentation such as current information, for example press releases and documents found on the websites of the relevant organizations, as well as archival information such as newspaper article and annual reports. *These documents have been properly referenced whenever they were used.*

### 6.2.1 Research Population

The interview methodology involved the conducting of 11 in-depth interviews. The interviews were arranged with role-players who are key representatives or stakeholders from the following organizations, institutions and groups (in no particular order):

**Table 6-2: Interview Candidates**

Respondent Number	Representative of... / Role...	Interviewed	Follow-up	Follow-up
<b>Respondent 1</b>	Business Owner	28-Feb-07	5-Nov-07	31-Jul-08
<b>Respondent 2</b>	Land Owner & Business Owner	5-Jul-08		
<b>Respondent 3</b>	Tourism Association	14-Jun-08		
<b>Respondent 4</b>	UNESCO SA National Commission	24-Mar-07	5-Nov-07	
<b>Respondent 5</b>	Tour Operator	19-Feb-07	22-Mar-07	
<b>Respondent 6</b>	Deputy Directorate: Protected Areas	13-Mar-07	22-Nov-07	31-Jul-08
<b>Respondent 7</b>	Representative Of Local Community & Board Member	20-Feb-07	24-Mar-07	
<b>Respondent 8</b>	Land Owner & Residents' Association	20-Feb-07	21-Mar-07	
<b>Respondent 9</b>	Business Owner & Community Welfare Champion	21-Mar-07		
<b>Respondent 10</b>	Tourism Association	5-Aug-08		
<b>Respondent 11</b>	World Heritage Site Management	6-Aug-08		

(Author's own)

All the respondents are stakeholders in one or more of the selected heritage sites of South Africa. Several are directly affected by the management and happenings surrounding World Heritage sites. These included local residents living within the geographical boundaries of the heritage sites, and tour operators who are reliant

upon the generation of business through the heritage sites. In terms of an overview of World Heritage sites in SA, discussions were had with representatives from the South African National Commission for UNESCO and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

Interview subjects were specifically selected by means of purposive non-probability sampling techniques in order to research the specific phenomenon being studied. I used judgement sampling in selecting subject matter experts who could provide rich information. Snowball and convenience sampling followed naturally as respondents enabled the collection of data from other respondents who have the same common ground and was based on availability and accessibility. The approach followed was the same as mentioned by Giddens (1990) who stated that qualitative research seeks a deeper understanding of phenomena and thus often focused samples are preferable to large and random samples. Very useful interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, as indicated in Table 6-2, who were able to provide a treasure trove of information. Where possible, follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify and validate the responses and the interpretation thereof with the interviewees (as is indicated by the additional dates in Table 6-2). Where this was not possible the interview write-up was emailed to interviewees for their comments in order to validate that the information from the interview was captured and portrayed accurately.

Another important issue is the subject of data redundancy or repetition (Glaser, 1994). While collecting data, there was no clear separation between collection and analysis and I analysed data continuously as it was gathered. The benefit of this is the ability to monitor patterns of repetition or redundancy. *The researcher acknowledges that any research process is not finite (and qualitative research in particular) and that it is possible to research the same topic ad infinitum.* However, surveying documentation and particularly interviews were conducted until I felt that redundancy in data was achieved. Initially, several informal focus groups were held to determine key topical issues and to identify interview subjects. As a result of this identification of potential subject matter experts, 11 comprehensive interviews were conducted and pertinent archival documentation was surveyed.

### 6.2.2 The Interview Process

In-depth interviewing is a preferred qualitative research methodology due to several advantages including that the interviews are targeted and focuses on specific topics, the line of questioning can be tailored as the interview progresses to gain insight and by providing perceived causal inferences. The aim was specifically to gain an understanding of the research topic as seen through the eyes of the interviewee.

Qualitative interviews are a researcher's attempt to understand the subject's point of view and derive meaning from that (Kvale, 1996). Several questions were asked during the interview (see Appendix A for the Interview Schedule), however significant freedom was allowed during the interview to probe further if this was thought to be productive in order to clarify understanding. With the knowledge of the respondents many of the interviews were recorded and the recordings saved on computer disk. Where recording was not allowed, I took extensive field notes. Confidentiality was a consideration and great care was taken to assure respondents of their anonymity. The information is considered especially valuable and insightful as respondents felt free to express their honest opinions when they understood that they would remain anonymous.

The first informal focus groups were spontaneous and informal discussions were held. The themes and questions were not structured. This was done in an effort to gain a feel for possible issues without pre-empting or limiting any possible topics. These discussions lasted for more than two hours at a time, were highly unstructured and very difficult to code. The value gained from these discussions was that possible interview questions crystallised and subject matter experts were identified with whom more structured interviews could be conducted.

The interview questions were based on the theory explored in the literature review and relate to the secondary research objectives (as discussed previously and illustrated in Table 6-2). A semi-structured approach was followed by preparing an

interview schedule with significant questions in an attempt to stimulate the conversation rather than control the flow of it (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). The nature of the interviews was conversational and informal in an attempt to create an amiable atmosphere, however the importance of the subject, and weight of the matter, was never disregarded. The answers given by the interviewees to the open-ended questions provide the quotations that serve as the main source of evidence in this study. An additional benefit of following a semi-structured approach was that coding was easier and provided a logical basis from which to start.

### **6.2.2.1 *Pre-interview Preparations***

The process of setting up the interviews involved telephonic conversations and sending email invitations to the selected individuals. Where appropriate I also tried to get personal appointments to explain my research and ask for their participation. What contributed greatly to the success of the identification and successful engagement of interviewees was the fact that key individuals promoted the research on my behalf and thus carved the way for the research. This was a key benefit of employing snowball sampling.

Overall, with the exception of one specific and unfortunately important role-player from iSimangaliso Wetland Park, the selected respondents were extremely helpful and willing to share their views and knowledge. Although the individual from iSimangaliso refused to participate for what ostensibly appeared to be political reasons, I was satisfied that those who were willing to participate represented the spectrum of strategic role players involved in the two identified World Heritage sites.

Below follows the invitation and consent letter that was sent to all the selected candidates:

*Department of Human Resources Management;  
Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences; University of Pretoria*

You are invited to participate in a PhD study conducted by Madia Levin under the supervision of Dr. Yvonne du Plessis of the Department of Human Resources Management, University of Pretoria.

1. **Description of Research:** The purpose of the study is to investigate the Organizational Behaviour (OB) of the World Heritage sites of SA in order to compile a strategic OB framework to be of practical use in the improvement of the management, organizational functioning, sustainability and performance of important to such destinations.
2. **Research Procedure:** I understand that I will be requested to be interviewed. The interview will be conducted by the researcher. I will be contacted to confirm the time and venue of the interview. The interview will be semi-structured according to an interview schedule. The interview will take approximately one hour. The interview transcript will be kept in a secure place.
3. **Risks and Benefits:** I take note that there are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research project. I understand that there are no direct benefits for me for participating in this study.
4. **Participant's Rights:** I understand that my participation is on a voluntary basis and that I can choose not to participate or withdraw from the project at any time and without adverse consequences. At my request a copy of this consent form will be provided to me.
5. **Confidentiality:** The interview will be treated confidentially and my participation will remain anonymous.
6. **Disclosure and Right of Access:** I agree not to disclose any confidential information discussed during the interview with any other parties. If there are points discussed that I would like to discuss in more depth, I will contact the researcher. I do not give up any legal rights by signing this informed consent form. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for participating in this research project.
7. **Consent:** I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and how it is being done.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Participant's Signature** or  (tick if you do not wish to sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Yours faithfully,



\_\_\_\_\_  
**M Levin, Researcher**



### **6.2.2.2 Conducting the Interviews**

The interviews were conducted at venues and times that suited the respondents. Before starting the interviews, the participants were briefed with regard to the description of the research, the taping of interviews for recordkeeping purposes and the confidentiality of the interview.

As Patton (1990:348) also rightly confirms, the recordings were indispensable. I could focus on the actual interaction (maintaining eye-contact and observing behaviours) rather than taking notes. However, recording was not always an option in which case I took detailed notes.

The goal of this process was to initiate a discussion regarding the strategic level of Organizational Behaviour of World Heritage sites in South Africa and collecting rich and detailed information from key stakeholders of two of South Africa's most prominent World Heritage sites.

I experienced the following positive and negative aspects during the interview process:

- The respondents were very keen to participate in the research. It may be argued that this might be as a result of the Hawthorne effect, respondents respond favourably to the special attention they receive (Jones, George & Hill, 2000:54), however, it appeared to be out of a genuine desire to promote the value of World Heritage and the specific sites, as well as to highlight what is happening at these sites (both good and bad) in order to facilitate the long-term and sustainable existence of the sites.
- The face-to-face aspect of the interviews enabled me to take note of dynamics during the discussions such as body language or sarcasm. These were often found to be indicators of true feelings.
- One particular advantage of interviews is that I was able to clarify or probe a particular issue immediately.

- The interview process was extremely time-consuming and very expensive (both in terms of incidental and direct costs incurred). To be able to conduct an interview implied logistical arrangements, emails and telephone calls, pre-interview research, preparation and printing, travelling to a venue as chosen by the interviewee, transcription of the recordings and the coding and analysis of the data. Qualitative research is an in-depth and protracted process requiring dedication and hard work but it was found to be an extremely rewarding experience.
- The interviewees appeared to relax and open up after being informed that their responses would be relayed on an anonymous basis and as such all quotes in this research refers to a specifically numbered respondent and not to a particular individual's name.
- Personally I have benefited greatly in terms of the skills that I have had to develop and sharpen to conduct the interviews and produce the findings. On a personal level it has been an extremely rewarding experience, although often exhausting and mentally challenging to meet the respondents and to try to understand and learn from their issues and experiences.

### **6.2.2.3 *Post-interview Actions***

Post-interview actions included transcribing hour upon hour of interview recordings (often listening to the same sentence over and over to get it exactly right) and storing information electronically. After transcription, I made an effort not to make assumptions or read meaning into statements and in some cases contacted the interviewee again to clarify and verify what had been said and meant. This is in line with the philosophy of triangulation (Tellis, 1997) which advocates the ethical requirement to confirm the validity of information.

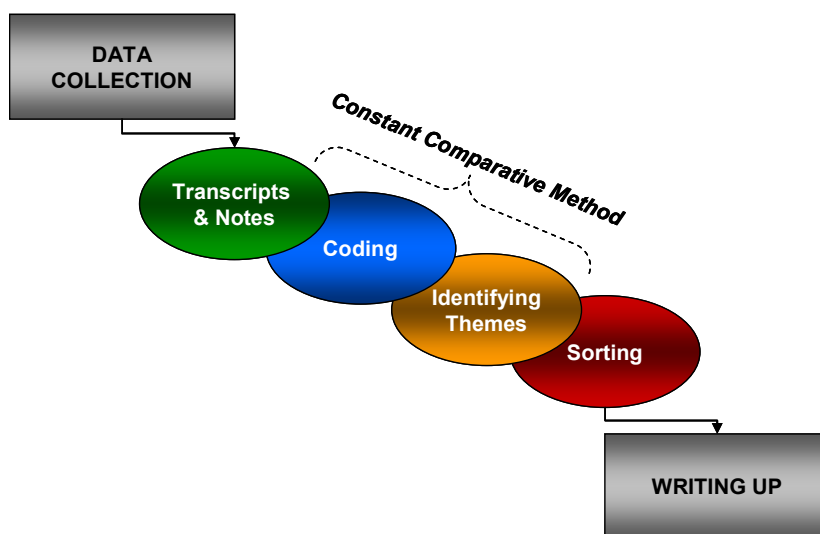
The research would not have been possible without the involvement of the respondents and they were thanked for their valuable contributions. Each participant

took time despite very busy schedules to accommodate this research effort and that is greatly appreciated.

### 6.2.3 Interpreting the Data

Although a computer was used to process the data (transcribing, writing up or editing), I did not use specific software for this process. The reason for this was that although software offered text retrieval capability or the like, this could not replace the curiosity, insight and sensitivity of a person. Potter (2002:149) aptly refers to the professional researcher as “the most sophisticated analytical device around”.

Finding meaning in the transcribed data involved a process of coding, finding themes and clustering data as illustrated in Figure 6-2 below (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:180; Schurink, 2003):



**Figure 6-2: The Process of Finding Meaning in Data**

(Adapted from Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:180; Schurink, 2003)

To code and identify themes is a time-consuming interpretive process. This process involved breaking up the data into meaningful parts and classifying these parts according to themes. Thematic analysis is a way of deciphering qualitative information. Themes are patterns found in the data that describe certain aspects as they relate to the research problem. Themes can be directly observed or can be

underlying, and thus can be manifest or latent (Boyatzis, 1998:1-4). This is the foundation for the interpretations and inferences I made that are discussed in the following chapter.

According to Conastas (1992:255) a fundamental step of qualitative analysis involves the analysis of the data through the development of categories. In order to identify themes the data had to be coded. Coding is used in qualitative research to structure and facilitate the analysis of the data and is a way of relating the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996:27; Weaver & Atkinson, 1994:31). Meaningful words, passages or topics were identified and labelled. Labels that were associated were collected and grouped so that similar information could be compared.

The first stage of the coding process involved *open coding* where the focus was on general concepts and categories. Similar incidents or quotes were labelled together. The next step was *axial coding* where the initial list of concepts and categories were refined. Axial coding is the identification of core themes during qualitative data analysis. Within Grounded Theory, it refers to the process of relating categories and concepts to each other until the basic frame of generic relationships is understood to include phenomenon, causal conditions, context conditions, intervening conditions, action strategies and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During axial coding some of the connections previously made were disregarded or new connections were made and causal relationships were noted. This is all part of the analytical process.

Qualitative data can easily become overwhelming and as such it is wise to find or develop a systematic way of storing the data that works for the researcher. In order to facilitate recordkeeping and data retrieval, multiple copies were made of original data, which were scanned to be stored electronically. All documents were labelled and saved electronically with the following naming convention: the date; name of document or individual. All documents were saved in appropriate folders.

#### 6.2.4 The Quality of the Data

It is important to show the reliability of the research results in order for the study to be worthwhile. Lincoln and Guba (1998); Patton (1990); and Tellis (1997), all suggest that a number of strategies should be employed to ensure credible research. This is often also referred to as triangulation. It is important to take cognisance of the following points in order to prove the credibility of a study:

- **Triangulation:** During this study several methods were employed to collect data and ensure that findings are credible. Personal interviews and informal focus groups were conducted with subject matter experts from various representative stakeholder groupings alongside a survey of relevant supporting documentation.
- **Validation:** Member checking was employed to ensure that respondents verified data and the interpretation thereof. A draft of the findings was sent to respondents for their information and verification.
- **Transferability:** To improve transferability of data the data found in the interviews and documentation were described in detail. Solid descriptive data forms the basis of qualitative data and ensures that data is transferable for future use.
- **Auditing:** The research data and findings were revisited continuously in an effort to ensure dependability. For the most part this was done by myself. However, the study leader played a significant part in ensuring that the process was consistent.

### 6.3 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

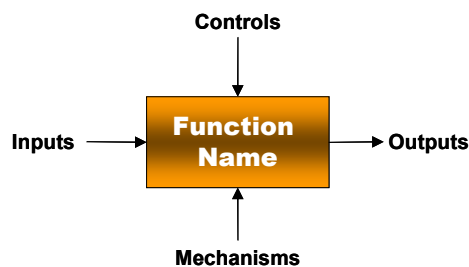
The graphic representation of the Strategic Organization Behaviour Framework is based on the Integrated Definition (IDEF) Function Modelling Method or IDEF0. IDEF diagrams were introduced in 1981 as part of the Integrated Computer-Aided Manufacturing (ICAM) Project (Mayer, Benjamin, Caraway, Painter, 1995: 245-290). The IDEF0 method is a method used to model systems from the functional or organizational perspective. It was designed to model the decisions, actions, and activities of an organization or other system and targets communication and analysis of the functional perspective of a system (Mayer *et al.*, 1995: 245-290).

As can be seen from in Figures 6-3 and 6-4 on the following page, the IDEF0 modelling technique consists of a graphic language and a modelling process that can be used to describe processes. It is an intuitive way to define, analyze and document the business as a whole as well as the functions and processes of the organization. The National Institute of Standards and Technology of the United States Department of Commerce standardised the IDEF0 notation in 1993. It is a public domain methodology (Knowledge Based Systems, 1997).

The main strength of the IDEF0 modelling technique is its simplicity: it uses one notational construct called the Input-Control-Output-Mechanism (ICOM). Each side of the function box has a standard meaning or relationships. Labels at the four sides of the box, indicated by arrows, dictates the arrow's role. Arrows entering the left side of the box are inputs. Inputs are transformed to produce outputs. Arrows entering the box at the top are controls, which specify the conditions required for the function to produce the right outputs. Arrows leaving the box on the right side are outputs and include data or objects produced by the function. Arrows connected to the bottom of the box represent mechanisms indicating the means that support the execution of the function (United States of America. Department of Commerce. National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1993:10-11).

As illustrated in Figure 6-3 below a ‘Context Diagram’ is a model of the function at the highest level of inputs, controls, outputs, and mechanisms (Department of Commerce. National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1993:3-6), where:

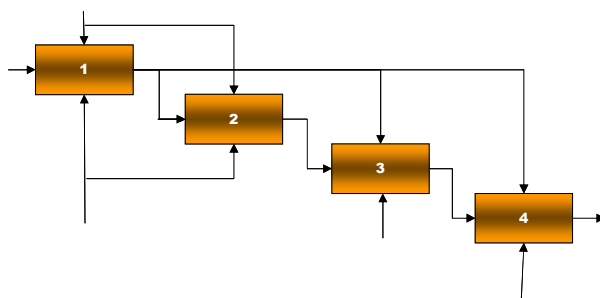
- inputs refer to items that trigger the activity;
- controls refer to guiding or regulating the activity conditions required to produce correct output;
- mechanisms refer to systems, people and equipment used to perform the activity;
- outputs refer to results of performing the activity.



**Figure 6-3: IDEF0 Context Diagram**

(Department of Commerce. National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1993)

Context diagrams are followed by Decomposition diagrams (see Figure 6-4) which link together the context diagrams, as depicted below:



**Figure 6-4: IDEF0 Decomposition Diagram**

(Knowledge Based Systems, 1997)

The benefits of using the IDEF0 methodology to model business processes are the following (Knowledge Based Systems, 1997):

- *“Understanding - modelling helps discover the nature of the business being modelled; that is, what is being done in the business”.*
- *“Communication - once understanding has been reached, the nature of the business processes can be documented and these documents easily communicated”.*
- *“Enlightenment - modelling helps uncover anomalies, redundancies, deficiencies and inefficiencies in the existing (as-is) business process”.*
- *“Improvement - a model allows you to select deficient areas of the business and its processes and to improve them”.*
- *“Redesign - a model provides a tangible basis for redesigning the process, performing simulations of the redesigned (to-be) business process as defined by the strategy. This means that strategies can be tested before implementation takes place”.*

## **6.4 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the actual methodology employed during the research conducted in the empirical phase of this study. It was found to be most insightful to examine the Organizational Behaviour, with emphasis on the strategic level, of selected South African World Heritage sites within a qualitative approach utilising in-depth interviews. This methodology facilitated the gathering of meaningful information in order to gain greater insight into how the organizations function.

The findings of this study will be presented in a thematic form rather than being organised based on the underpinning theory. The Case Study research method was employed and the open coding procedure of Grounded Theory was used to assist in data analysis in order to identify these themes. The following chapter will discuss the research results and the framework in realisation of the research objectives.