

CHAPTER 5

SYNTHESIS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is to summarize the findings of the research that I conducted in this study. I shall provide a summary in respect of Chapters 1 to 4, and follow this with a discussion of the main research findings with regard to the research questions that were formulated in Chapter 1. Recommendations based on these findings will be made. I believe that the recommendations in this chapter may contribute to the improvement of the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools.

5.2 SYNTHESIS

In this study, entitled **“Contextual factors that influence the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme”**, several contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes, as well as the implications thereof for education (especially secondary schools), were investigated.

During the literature study several facts became apparent. The staggering number of people living with HIV & AIDS is increasing and projections are that life expectancy in Southern Africa may drop to a mere 30 years by the year 2010 (in this regard refer to paragraph 2.3 in Chapter 2). The reality of sexual behaviour being the primary factor that fuels the spread of HIV & AIDS also became evident. A further fact that surfaced was that South Africa has progressed to a Stage 3 country, due to the unique socio-economic problems that prevail in this country. The fact, that the HIV & AIDS prevalence rate

remains unacceptably high, despite many prevention strategies that have been in place for several years, also became obvious. The most prominent prevention strategies appear to be education and positive changes in sexual behaviour. It seems as if HIV & AIDS programmes and education in schools might not be curbing the infection rate, as projected mortality rates among adolescents become a reality. In the light of this reality, several implications surfaced for the school as an institution that must assist in curbing the spread of HIV & AIDS, as part of its obligation to the community. The role and obligation of the school and its teachers with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes, and especially with regard to learners in the shadow of HIV & AIDS, were kept in mind when the primary research question was formulated, namely: **“In what manner do contextual factors influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in South African schools?”**

With regard to the aims of this study, I distinguished between a primary aim and certain secondary aims, after the formulation of research questions. A number of questions were derived from the primary research question, and, by researching the answers to these questions, the primary question could be answered. The formulation of aims gave focus and direction to the study, in such a manner that meaningful empirical research could be conducted.

In Chapter 1 I focused on the background and orientation regarding my study. I indicated my area of interest and elucidated my rationale for undertaking the study. I outlined the aim and relevance of the study with regard to certain choices that I made during the planning phase. I formulated the main research question against the background of these choices and considerations. The formulation of the purpose and central research question of this study is descriptive by nature, and focuses on exploring the manner in which teachers experience and give meaning to the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme in their schools, thereby highlighting contextual factors that influence

programme implementation. After formulating my research questions, I concisely mentioned the possible contribution of my study, and identified assumptions with which I approached the study. I then stated the paradigmatic perspective with which I approached my study, and presented a brief overview of my research design, methodological choices, ethical considerations and quality criteria. I concluded Chapter 1 with a brief overview of the thesis in terms of its five chapters.

In Chapter 2 I explored relevant literature as background to my study, and presented my conceptual framework. I started the investigation with an examination of the relevant literature on HIV & AIDS, as contextual backdrop of my study. I then focused on the extent and impact of the pandemic within the South African context, with special reference to the impact on education and the curricula. I included discussions on the challenges to, and expectations of education (schools), as an agent in society that has to implement HIV & AIDS programmes in order to combat the HIV & AIDS pandemic. I included a discussion on the theories with regard to behaviour change, that forms the basis of HIV & AIDS prevention and intervention programmes. In this chapter I also focused on the responsibilities of school management and teachers who are expected to implement the HIV & AIDS programme and develop an HIV & AIDS policy for their schools. I concluded Chapter 2 with a discussion on the Life Orientation programme in which HIV & AIDS education is embedded, and also clarified the key concepts of my study.

Chapter 3 includes my discussions and justification regarding the choices that I made with regard to designing and conducting the empirical part of my study. I employed a case study design in order to identify, explore and explain contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools. I specifically followed an instrumental case study design and utilised individual interviews, observation, a reflective field journal and visual data as data

collection strategies and data documentation procedures. I then justified my preferred methodology in terms of my research questions and purpose of my study. I also described the manner in which I conducted the thematic analysis and interpretation procedures during the study. This was followed by a discussion on the strengths and challenges of the selected methodology that I utilised during the empirical part of my research. I also highlighted the strategies that I employed to address these issues. I completed Chapter 3 with a discussion on the ethical guidelines that I adhered to during the data collection and analysis phases of my research, and on the manner in which I aimed to improve the quality of my research in the light of qualitative quality criteria.

I reported the results that I obtained during my study in Chapter 4. I provided a holistic view of the results by means of tables and diagrams in order to illustrate the responses of the participants as well as my interpretations thereof. I discussed the collected data in terms of the aims, responses and outcomes of the various questions posed during my field work sessions. I also made use of verbatim responses and visual images to supplement my discussions, with the aim of addressing my primary research question, namely: In what manner do contextual factors influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools?

5.3 FINDINGS REGARDING MY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the following discussion I shall present my findings and final conclusions in terms of the questions that were formulated in Chapter 1 (in this regard refer to paragraph 1.4 on pages 6 and 7). In believe that, by answering the secondary questions, light will simultaneously be shed on the primary research question, and in this manner the contextual factors that influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme, are identified, explored, explained and described.

The findings will be categorised under the four secondary questions referred to above:

5.3.1 Secondary Question 1: What are the expectations of the Department of Education (as stipulated in the relevant policy) with regard to the HIV & AIDS programme and the implementation thereof in secondary schools?

I found that

- ❑ the Department of Education requires of schools to implement HIV & AIDS programmes that are part of the Life Orientation Learning Area within NCS requirements;
- ❑ the school is a service deliverer to the community and is expected to be the vanguard in the prevention of HIV & AIDS infection among adolescents;
- ❑ the escalation in the number of HIV & AIDS infections directs an appeal to the school to persevere in its mandatory obligation and responsibility for addressing the prevention of HIV & AIDS infection;
- ❑ the totality of a school (for example the curriculum, management, policy and organization) is affected by HIV & AIDS;
- ❑ HIV & AIDS impacts on education supply and delivery in a school;
- ❑ in schools Life Orientation is not perceived as a serious Learning Area, as management and teachers view it as less important than other Learning Areas;
- ❑ the sensitive nature of the Learning Area content makes teachers uncomfortable, and they rather avoid the topics and the programme as a whole;
- ❑ the time allocated to Life Orientation on the schools' timetables deviates from departmental requirements;

- ❑ additional AIDS awareness days and involvement of NGOs and the Department of Health in the schools' HIV & AIDS programme occur sporadically. Schools do not take initiative to provide and include these services within their HIV & AIDS programmes, and wait for others to offer their services;
- ❑ schools experience logistical problems and a lack of suitable venues for the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme;
- ❑ schools experience the inadequate utilisation of teaching resources and materials with regard to the implementation of Life Orientation, and especially the HIV & AIDS programme;
- ❑ teachers and school managers are not abreast with NCS requirements with regard to Life orientation as a new, examinable subject;
- ❑ teachers are allocated to Life Orientation as a Learning Area in addition to other Learning Areas for which they are responsible; consequently the Life Orientation Learning Area is of secondary importance, and teachers are not able to specialise in Life Orientation as a Learning Area.

5.3.2 Secondary Question 2: What significance do the School Governing Body, the school management team and the teachers attach to the HIV & AIDS programme and the extent to what opportunities are created and resources made available in order to adequately implement the programme?

I found that

- ❑ teachers experience the encouragement of learners, to change behaviour that may expose them to HIV & AIDS infection, as a great challenge;

- ❑ simultaneously dealing with learners who are sexually active and those who are not, creates a barrier for the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme, as teachers experience this as difficult;
- ❑ the sensitive nature of HIV & AIDS topics is challenging for teachers, and in many cases these topics are not dealt with;
- ❑ in general most teachers avoid HIV & AIDS as a topic because of personal convictions, preferences, beliefs and probably being infected with HIV themselves;
- ❑ teachers perceive the HIV & AIDS programme as having limited or no impact on learners. Teachers experience a low level of confidence in the success of the programme, and regard the programme as ineffective;
- ❑ the responsibility for dealing with HIV & AIDS, sexuality and sensitive topics is regarded as being that of female teachers. In general male teachers are not responsible for the implementation of the programme, possibly because of cultural and gender stereotypes in society with regard to sexuality education;
- ❑ there is a lack of training opportunities and poor attendance of training sessions for teachers with regard to HIV & AIDS programmes and Life Orientation;
- ❑ teachers are not fully aware of what the HIV & AIDS programme within Life Orientation entails;
- ❑ the existence of sexual relationships between teachers and learners defeats the aim of the programme and presents challenges for the teachers who are responsible for the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes.

5.3.3 Secondary Question 3: How do school management teams and teachers perceive their respective responsibilities with regard to the implementation of an HIV & AIDS programme in their schools?

I found that

- ❑ school managers are ignorant with regard to HIV & AIDS programmes and the implementation thereof;
- ❑ there is a lack of sound management practices with regard to the implementation of the Life Orientation curriculum (especially the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes);
- ❑ school managers are uninvolved in the efforts that teachers make to initiate and implement programmes within the classroom and in the school as a whole;
- ❑ stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and the SGB are not involved in the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes;
- ❑ school management have not developed functional and practicable HIV & AIDS school policies in order to facilitate the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes;
- ❑ school management are well aware of the national policy, but have not studied and incorporated it within their school management practices;
- ❑ limited time for HIV & AIDS programme implementation has been allocated on school timetables by management;
- ❑ Life Orientation does not receive serious attention from school management, consequently the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes is neglected;
- ❑ HIV & AIDS as a topic and a programme is not integrated within all school activities and subjects;

- ❑ no funds are allocated in the school budget to support the HIV & AIDS programme implementation and/or improvement;
- ❑ management are unaware of relevant documentation with regard to HIV & AIDS programmes and the implementation thereof.

5.3.4 Secondary Question 4: What are the attitudes and lived-experiences of teachers with regard to the practical implications of the HIV & AIDS programme in the classroom?

I found that

- ❑ there is a lack of parental involvement in the schools, and especially limited parental support and involvement with regard to HIV & AIDS programmes;
- ❑ cultural taboos in the community do not allow parents (especially fathers) to talk to learners about sex, sexuality and HIV & AIDS. The community therefore relies on the school to fulfil this role, but the school does not accept and fulfil this responsibility – consequently the HIV & AIDS programme does not reach the learners for whom it is intended;
- ❑ societal factors such as poverty, substance abuse and peer pressure in the community necessitate and influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in the school;
- ❑ myths with regard to HIV & AIDS in the school community negatively influence the rare implementation efforts of teachers with regard to HIV & AIDS programmes;
- ❑ teachers experience the low level of social morality in the community as a challenge regarding the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme within the school;
- ❑ parents are not involved in school activities and regard HIV & AIDS education as the school's responsibility;

- ❑ the behaviours and statements of authority figures and politicians, within the school's community and in society at large, are defeating the aims of the HIV & AIDS programme, and negatively influence the efforts of teachers and school management with regard to the implementation of the programme.

5.3.5 Findings: a final conclusion

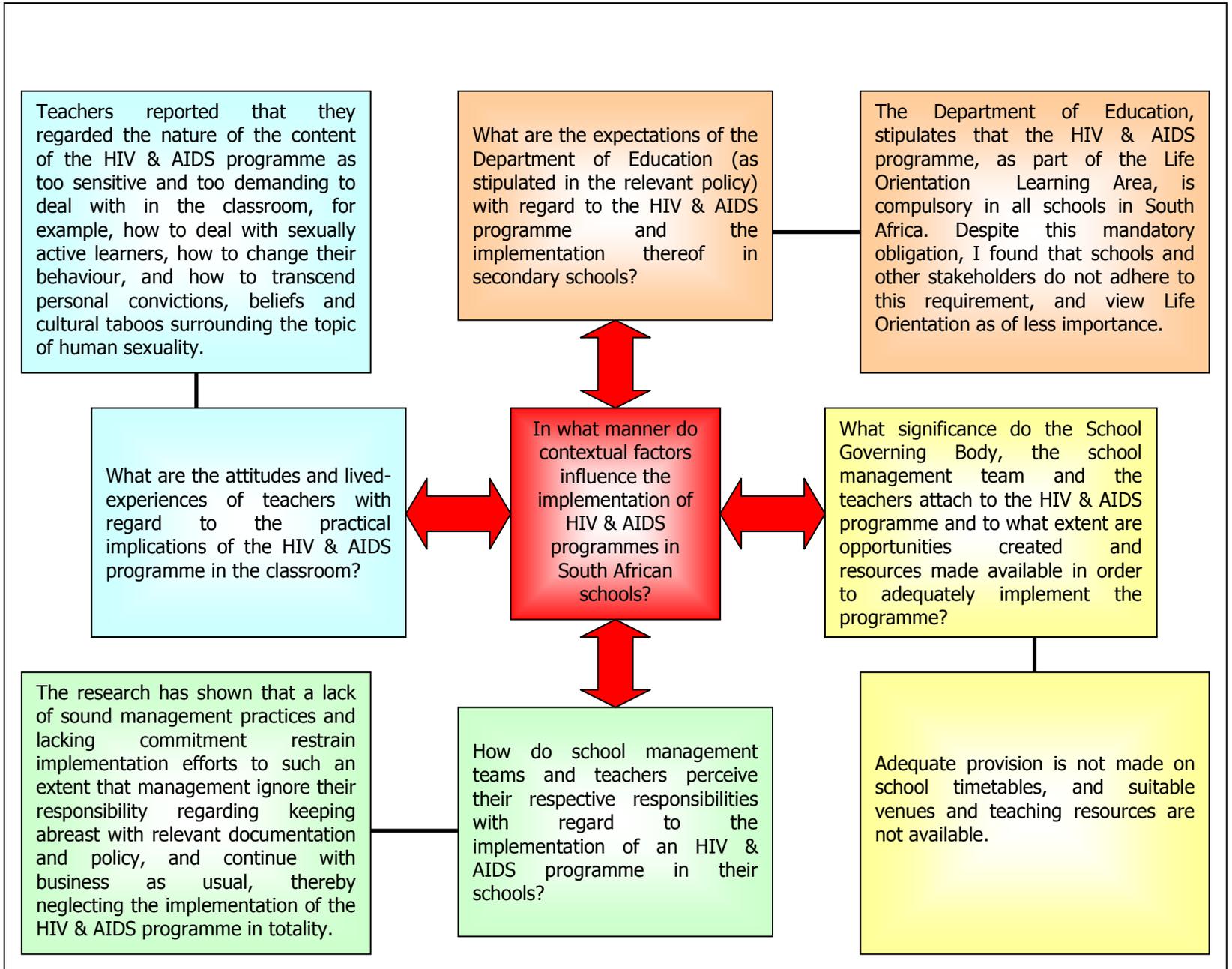
The Department of Education, in *The National Policy on HIV & AIDS for Teachers and Learners in public schools and students and teachers in further education and training institutions*, and, *The HIV & AIDS emergency: Department of Education guidelines for teachers*, stipulates that the HIV & AIDS programme, as part of the Life Orientation Learning Area, is compulsory in all schools in South Africa. Despite this mandatory obligation, I found that schools and other stakeholders do not adhere to this requirement, and view Life Orientation as of less importance. Adequate provision is not made on school timetables, and suitable venues and teaching resources are not available. Regarding the lived-experiences of teachers, they reported that they regarded the nature of the content of the HIV & AIDS programme as too sensitive and too demanding to deal with in the classroom, for example, how to deal with sexually active learners, how to change their behaviour, and how to transcend personal convictions, beliefs and cultural taboos surrounding the topic of human sexuality. This can possibly be ascribed to a lack of proper training, and the fact that human sexuality forms an integral and personal part of *being*, and of constituting *who I am*. Teachers further reported a low level of confidence in the programme and view it as of limited impact.

The research has further shown that a lack of sound management practices and lacking commitment restrain implementation efforts to such an extent that management ignore their responsibility regarding keeping abreast with relevant

documentation and policy, and continue with business as usual, thereby neglecting the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in totality.

Other than the above-mentioned contextual factors that negatively influence the implementation and status of the HIV & AIDS programme, are factors such as poverty, substance abuse, peer pressure, current myths, and the low level of social morality in the community (refer to Diagram 5.1 for a graphic presentation [that is self-explanatory] of the relation between the findings of the study and answering the primary and secondary questions).

Diagram 5.1: A final conclusion on the relation between the findings and answering of the primary and secondary research questions



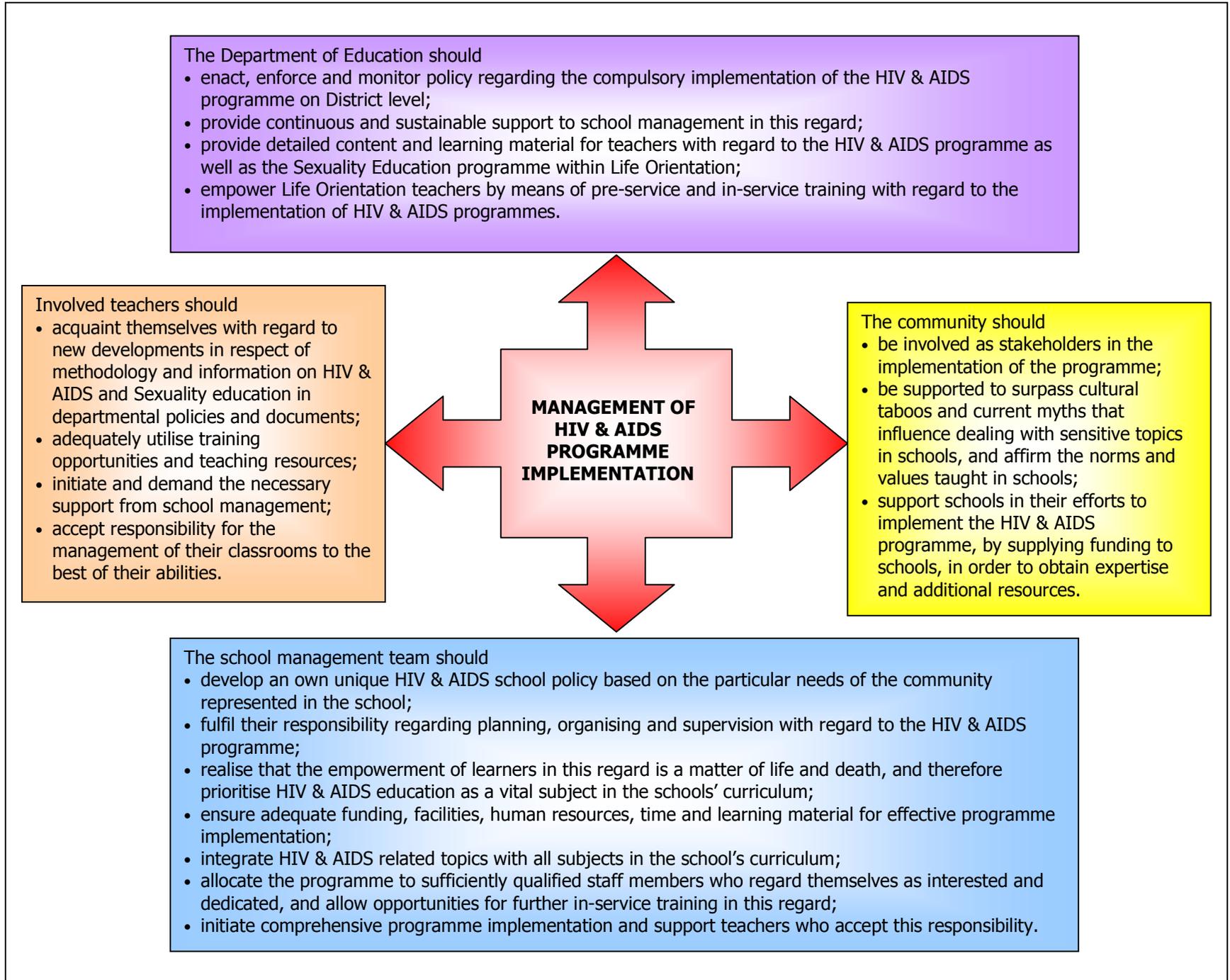
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on my findings (discussed in paragraph 5.3) with regard to the four broadly identified themes that emerged from my empirical study (refer to Diagram 4.9 in Chapter 4), I now present my recommendations.

5.4.1 Recommendations for rectifying problems addressed in this study

During the analysis and interpretation of the data, the most prominent findings that answer the primary and secondary research questions point to the inadequate management of HIV & AIDS programmes, whether on macro, meso or micro level. The following diagram (Diagram 5.2 on the next page) indicates my recommendations for improving management practices.

Diagram 5.2: Recommendations for improving HIV & AIDS programme implementation



5.4.2 Recommendations for further research

In the light of the findings in paragraph 5.3, and the recommendations in Diagram 5.2, I suggest that further research be undertaken with regard to the development of effective parent and community programmes that go beyond an HIV & AIDS or sexual health agenda, and empower parents, community members and other adults to overcome gender stereotypes and cultural taboos. This research may take the form of the development of family counselling programmes that promote open communication regarding issues such as sexuality, social stigma, and parental responsibility with regard to the sexual education of children in the family and community.

As this study involved schools as case studies, additional comparative studies can be undertaken, to explore the manner in which contextual factors within other communities influence the implementation of the HIV & AIDS programme in their respective schools.

Based on the exploration, identification and description of contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, I also recommend a follow-up study on the sustainability and continuous innovation of programmes in schools and communities.

5.5 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MY STUDY

The main contribution of my study is that contextual factors, that negatively influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, were identified and investigated.

I believe that this study adds to the growing body of knowledge on the implementation of the school's curriculum with regard to HIV & AIDS programmes. My investigation of the manner in which contextual factors

influence the implementation of the programme contributes to current knowledge on curriculum implementation and management in schools.

This study further contributes to the realisation and optimising of educational policy in practice (schools). As such this study highlights the manner in which educational policy becomes a workable instrument in the hands of school managers, that empowers them and provides the parameters in which a unique, own school policy can be designed. I further believe that the identification and investigation of contextual factors, that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, will contribute to addressing the hindrances that negatively influence programme delivery to learners, and may direct an appeal to school management and teachers to embrace their responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the programme.

In addition to this, I am of the opinion that this study might contribute to the improvement of teacher training and the professional development of school managers. The exploration and description of the lived-experiences of teachers (such as being uncomfortable when dealing with sensitive topics) with regard to the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools may have significant value for the training of Life Orientation teachers and curriculum developers.

5.6 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF MY STUDY

In this discussion I shall consider possible limitations of my study, which might be related to certain challenges that I faced whilst conducting the study (refer to paragraph 3.9 for detailed discussions on the challenges that I experienced).

On entering the research field as a white, Afrikaans speaking, graduate male, I was faced with the challenge of reporting research findings that were true to the reality that I investigated, and of avoiding personal and biased findings. However, I aimed to address the potential limitation of being influenced toward personal and biased findings, by constantly being aware of the likelihood thereof, and by reflecting, by asking myself: "Did I hear what the participants tried to tell me? Did I see what they wanted me to see?". In addition to a field journal and frequent debriefing sessions with my supervisor, I returned to the participants to confirm the outcomes of all interviews and observations, in order to limit my subjectivity and enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

Another challenge, and possibly a limitation with regard to the outcomes of my study, was that generalizations should not be made from a single or even three case studies. Despite this possible limitation, I believe that the outcomes of my study may relate to research findings from similar contexts. I also kept in mind that the aim of my research was not to generalize, but rather to gain an in-depth view of contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, from an interpretivist and constructivist perspective.

5.7 A FINAL WORD (OR TWO)

Continuous efforts to combat the spread of the HIV & AIDS pandemic on a global scale presently rely on local initiatives in every community, especially in schools, to present education programmes, in order to curb the vigorous spread of the national epidemic. In this study I identified and investigated contextual factors that influence the implementation of HIV & AIDS programmes in schools, in an attempt to reduce the impact of the epidemic on a local level.

I utilised a qualitative research approach by means of an instrumental case study design with the aim of identifying and investigating the lived-experiences of teachers who are responsible for implementing HIV & AIDS programmes in schools. In doing so, I believe that this study contributes to existing knowledge with regard to HIV & AIDS prevention, and indicates factors that need to be considered when attempting to improve programme implementation in schools.

Based on the sound practising of science that I adhered to during this study I regard the findings that I obtained as the authentic truth for the context in which this study was conducted. Every thought and consideration, deliberations and actions were undertaken with the following principles in mind: non-discrimination, which is reflected in a commitment to a non-racial and non-sexist society; democratic values and implementation of the programme, taking the needs and interests of the learners as well as the community at large into account; a multi-sectoral approach which draws on the resources of other education support services; an awareness and implementation of human rights and responsibilities within a democratic society; contextualising relevant issues in terms of community concerns, changes in the working environment and global issues; respect for diversity and a commitment to the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of our country; the development of a national identity; basing the primary approach to teaching upon acknowledging and drawing from existing competencies and resources in the learners as well as the broader community; access to appropriate and innovative resource material; and classroom methodology that empowers the learners to participate at all levels in the school and society, demystifies social relations of power and promotes active, critical and dynamic learner-based education.