

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM FORMULATION, AIM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Educational Ministries and Departments around the globe are under immense internal and external pressures to improve on their policy implementation strategies (De Clercq, 2001:37). According to Becher, Eraut, and Knight (1981:153) governments place the responsibility of successful implementation of education policies on the shoulders of educational managers. These managers are the ones who ultimately determine whether a government policy directive is successful in its implementation because it is these managers who translate policy into action. The policy directive for Further Education and Training (FET) in South Africa is to transform FET colleges into responsive and effective institutions (RSA, 1998c:5). If Becher et al.'s assertion above is taken seriously then this implies that the success of the transformation process of FET colleges in South Africa depends to a large extent on managers of these colleges. The critical question is: Do these FET college managers have sufficient power and authority to drive the transformation process at college level? Rondinelli, Middleton, and Verspoor (1990:87) indicate that poor management can also cause serious policy implementation problems.

Transformation of the FET sector in South Africa entails a very broad and complex process; this study will therefore focus on the role of management during the transformation of FET colleges in Gauteng. Based on Rondinelli, et al. (1990:87) assertion the study will focus on the perceived power and authority of managers as well as their ability to carry out one of the management functions as identified by various management theories, namely that of effective planning.

Phrased differently, this study sets out to investigate the relationship between government policy and institutional practices with regards to the capacity of management in Further Education and Training colleges to implement policies. To be able to establish this relationship, the study will not interrogate policy as promulgated, but will investigate the conceptualization of policy at its origin.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

In 1996 the Minister of National Education in South Africa appointed a committee that had to start the process of developing policy for the Further Education and Training sector in the new political dispensation (RSA, 1998a:1). This committee was known as the National Committee on Further Education (NCFE). The NCFE presented its final report to the Minister in August 1997. Concurrent to this process the National Business Initiative (NBI) conducted its own investigation and presented its report in October 1998 to the Member of the Executive Committee of Education (MEC) in Gauteng. The NBI was commissioned by the MEC for Education and its brief was to investigate and prepare a report that was going to inform policy decisions around FET colleges in Gauteng. Although a number of reports and research studies have been conducted in the field of FET in South Africa the two aforementioned reports had the greatest impact on policy development within the FET sector and will thus form much of the basis for this study.

The NCFE Report culminated in the Green Paper on Further Education, which in turn led to the Further Education and Training Act, 98 of 1998. The Further Education and Training (FET) Act, 98 of 1998 replaced all previous legislation that regulated institutions that were considered to be included in the further education and training sector in South Africa. The objective of the FET policy and legislation is to transform the further education and training system in South Africa so that the FET sector contributes significantly to the much-needed development of certain categories of human resource.

Both the Education White Paper 4 and Further Education and Training Act (Act 98 of 1998) both the key legislative framework around the transformation of the FET sector. The purpose and intent of the FET policy framework is for the sector to respond better to human resources, economic and development needs of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1998a: 3).

The Green Paper on FET (RSA, 1998a) states that the college sector needs to be developed and expanded to be a vibrant, key component of transformation so that further education and training is available and accessible to learners and everybody else who wishes to utilize this system.

According to the Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998b: 6) a transformed high quality, responsive FET system is important for the future development of the country. In summary the FET sector should respond to the needs of the country, the labour market as well as the needs of the communities served by FET colleges (RSA, 1998c: 1). The purpose that the FET sector should serve is articulated in the FET Act (98 of 1998) as the establishment of a nationally co-coordinated further education and training system that promotes cooperative governance and provides for programme-based further education and training (RSA, 1998c: 5).

Another piece of legislation that complements the FET Act, 98 of 1998 is the Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998. The Skills Development Act sets out to promote and ensure human resource development in South Africa. These two acts indicate a major shift in the South African further education and training system. From the previously fragmented separate systems of education and training on one hand and labour on the other. According to the FET Act, 98 of 1998 managers of an FET institution are responsible for the effective management and administration of these institutions and consequently the implementation of the two acts (RSA, 1998c: 18). This scenario posed the challenge to managers of these institutions, and also to the whole transformation process of the old technical colleges, to change into fully-fledged FET institutions as envisaged in the FET policy.

### 1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study intends to investigate the relationship between the intended policy and the implemented policy. The problems that are being encountered in the FET sector in terms of policy implementation at college level need to be investigated and be put in context.

To be able to understand the problem that this study seeks to address, the policy process needs attention. Jansen (2001:271) presents an argument that the gap that exists between policy and practices in South Africa is due to problems with policy development processes.

Many authors in the field of policy analysis do not necessarily disagree with Jansen but their literature points to the fact that South Africa has comparatively produced some of the best policies since 1994. For instances Lungu (2001:92) points to the fact that South Africa has tried to develop the “most elaborate and inclusive public policy processes in Africa”. Soudien, Jacklin and Hoadley (2001:78) also mention that since 1994 landmark laws, that created favourable conditions for policy development, have been passed in South Africa.

If indeed South Africa has developed good policies, why then are there gaps between intended policy and implemented policy as per Jansen’s (2001) argument? Pandor (2001:74; cf. Lungu, 2001:92) says that while it is agreed that South African policies are some of the best globally the processes of policy development has been characterised by numerous challenges. One of the challenges cited by Lungu (2001:92) is that for instance government departments in South Africa use discretion when stakeholders are to participate in the policy development process. In this regard some stakeholders are excluded form the process while the preferred stakeholders are involved (Lungu, 2001:92). In South Africa the green papers, as policy initiating documents, are produced as discussion documents that provide the broad parameters for the intended policy.

Once inputs to the green paper have been received and considered a White Paper is published which serves as the formal policy framework on which legislation will be based (Lungu, 2001:94). This study attempts to look at the policy from the Green Paper phase to the promulgation of the FET Act.

According to Jansen (2001:271) the explanation that is usually given for the gap between intended policy and implemented policy is the lack of resources, the legacy of inequality created by the previous regime and the dearth of human capacity to translate policy into practice. According to the research on which the Green Paper in Further Education and Training was based some of the managers in the former technical colleges lack management skills and knowledge that will enable them to successfully implement the new policy imperatives.

In this regard the Green Paper on FET states: “**An authoritarian management culture** still pervades in many institutions, which accentuates race and gender inequality within the sector” (RSA, 1998a: 13). The Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998b: 13) states that managers of FET institutions **lack professional commitment** in managing FET colleges in South Africa.

The above statements indicate that the lack of capacity could be the reason for the non-implementation of policy. Could this be the main and only reason for the non-implementation?

The Green Paper (RSA, 1998a) argues that effective management of further Education and Training (FET) colleges will be of pivotal importance if South Africa is to succeed in establishing and developing a vibrant further education and training sector. Some of the challenges faced by policy implementers in FET colleges according to the Green Paper on FET (RSA, 1998a) include, among others:

- 1 *A lack of coherence and co-ordination:* the FET sector prior to 1998 was fragmented and the delivery of services poorly planned.
- 2 The funding of programmes was uneven across different colleges and created distorted incentives and disincentives.
- 3 Different FET programmes and qualifications were poorly articulated, inhibiting student mobility and leading to high levels of inefficiency.
- 4 Programmes differed widely with respect to quality, standards of provision, outcomes and curriculum.
- 5 FET provision reflected rigid and outmoded distinction between ‘academic’ education and ‘vocational’ training. Consequently, technical and vocational education lacks parity of esteem with traditional schooling.
- 6 New entrants into the labour market generally lacked appropriate knowledge and skills. Opportunities for employment are inadequate, while the needs of those who do not have formal jobs, and those whose main hope of making a living lies in the informal sector and in small and medium enterprises, were largely neglected.
- 7 Employment argued that many programmes offered by technical colleges and regional training centres were irrelevant and outdated. Equipment was antiquated and tuition was of poor overall quality.
- 8 *Organisational ethos and the culture of learning, teaching and service:* Adverse working conditions and a breakdown in the culture of teaching and learning, as well as service delivery were reflected in poor moral, a poor work ethic and low professional self-esteem amongst many educators. Up to 1998, an authoritarian management culture pervaded in many institutions, which accentuates race and gender inequality within the sector.

To help managers to meet these challenges the Green Paper set out broad parameters within which future policy had to be developed. The FET Act, 98 of 1998 stipulates that it will be required of managers of FET in South African institutions to be sufficiently competent in managing issues such as finances, administration and human resources (cf. Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development, 1999: xix). To be able to carry out these responsibilities, allocated to them by the FET Act, 98 of 1998 it was recommended that institutional capacity building should be one of the focus areas. The success of the envisaged FET colleges will, to a greater extent, be determined by the existence of strong and focused leadership of these colleges. To ensure this, the National Department of Education (DoE) and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) envisaged devolving increased powers to FET institutions. Accordingly this progressive devolution of power to FET institutions will be on the basis of these institutions demonstrating capacity to exercise such powers effectively and responsibly. This line of reasoning is also enunciated in the NBI report. Table 1.1 reflects the recommendations made by the NBI (1998) that deal with issues of transformation and the key-role-players:

**TABLE 1.1: RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE NBI REPORT (1998)**

**Recommendation 6**

The process of transformation should be lead by the colleges, within a time frame determined by the Department, and on the basis of clear criteria that are published by the GDE in advance....

**Recommendation 19**

To give Gauteng a competitive edge and to better serve the people of the Province, the college should take a positive view of transformation and be prepared to take a lead in this process.

**Recommendation 22**

Colleges should draw up an institutional development plan, to equip themselves for the new functions and responsibilities that increased autonomy will entail, and to meet the strategic planning, information system and financial management requirements outlined in the White Paper on FET.

**Recommendation 29**

Colleges should ensure that the new vision, mission and strategic plans of the institutions and the new FET framework are effectively communicated and shared with all members of the college community.

**Recommendation 35**

The GDE should develop a programme of support for colleges, to promote Outcomes Based Education and Curriculum Development, in accordance with the requirements of SAQA and the NQF.

**Recommendation 47**

Colleges should develop a programme of staff workshops to familiarise staff with the new policies. College task teams should be established, to involve staff in the institutional planning and development.

Two imperatives emerge from the brief outline of the concerns expressed about FET colleges in the Green Paper and the FET Act as well as recommendations of the NBI report. Firstly, the need to strengthen management capacity is clearly indicated and secondly the need to devolve greater power and authority to FET institutional level.



Many years have lapsed since the promulgation of the FET Act. This should have given provincial departments of education ample time to restructure the FET sector, to develop management teams in these institutions and to devolve the envisaged greater power and authority to these institutions. If these imperatives were actively pursued by GDE in terms of their transformation agenda, policy implementation could have had a different understanding of policy development and implementation at institutional level.

Jansen (2001:271) argues that many of the public policies in education in South Africa since 1994, were meant to be political symbols. It is Jansen's assertion that since 1994 the ruling party in South Africa viewed the process for the development of public policy as a struggle for the achievement of political goals (Jansen, 2001:272). This stance by the ruling party was driven by the need to quickly mark a shift from the previous apartheid order to a new democratic order. Therefore political agendas rather than any other reasons that are normally advanced for policy successes have motivated the policy process. It is within this context that Jansen (2001:271) advances the argument that the non-implementation of government policy should be explained within the context of political symbolism.

#### **1.4 THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION DILEMMA**

The intentions of the South African government about various educational policies are to restructure and transform the education system (Sayed, 2001:189). These intentions have been communicated through various sources but according to Sayed (2001:189) there were many frustrations that came with these intentions. Sayed (2001:189) cites the issue of personnel appointed across all levels of government institutions as one obstacle towards the realization of these good intentions.

Jansen (2001:47) puts the failure of government policies squarely on the shoulders of government. Jansen (2001:47; cf. Sayed, 2001:189) argues that while government has good intentions with its policies, these policy intentions do not always address critical issues of educational changes at institutional level.

In May 2003 the Minister of Education announced the appointment of new principals of FET colleges in South Africa. According to Ayyar (1996:348; cf. Jansen, 2001:48) the appointment of new personnel should be welcomed but this does not go far in addressing the issue of successful policy implementation at college level. Jansen (2001:48) indicates that a study by Hess (1997) has established that the lack on non-implementation of government policy is not due to the lack of resources, including human resources. It is primarily due to the fact that reform policies tend to be symbolically attractive but not intended to “improve the costs required by significant change” (Jansen, 2001:49).

Galvin and Fauske (2000:43) introduce a significant concept that tries to explain the non-implementation of educational policy. According to Galvin and Fauske (2000:43) the main reason is the difference in approach to policy development and implementation by both policy makers and policy implementers. On the one hand policy makers are classified as deductive thinkers as they derive policy from existing theories that describe how the policy process works (Galvin & Fauske, 2000:43) and they therefore do not consider the practical conditions in which the policy is to be implemented. On the other hand policy implementers are regarded as inductive thinkers. Inductive thinkers build on operative theory of collaboration from the synthesis of their experience (Galvin & Fauske, 2000:43). The essence of Galvin & Fauske’s argument is that policy makers do not take into account the context of policy implementation. They are guided by theory that might not hold true in certain contexts of implementation and do not take into account the theories behind their practices.

Although Jansen (2001) claims that the idea of policy as a step-by-step process is erroneous and that it is actually a messy process, this study as a point of departure does not involve itself in the policy development process, but looks at the hiatus between policy origination and implementation. The linear model process as outlined by Turner and Hulme (1997:78; cf. Dunn, 1994:16; Lungu, 2001:93) will therefore merely serve as an orientation point to look at the two extreme ends of the process.

According to Lodge (1982:19) the Minister of education is the one who defines objectives, priorities and decisions on government policy. It is Lodge's (1982:19) contention that politicians expect practitioners to concentrate on means where ends have already been defined. Can practitioners take decisions that will enable them to contextualise the means in order to get to the already defined ends? Do managers of education institutions have power and authority to take decisions that impact on a centrally defined policy? Lodge (1982:19) does not think so and says that politicians wield so much power that other levels of decision-making are rendered ineffective. He cited as an illustration of absolute power by politicians, an incident where Thatcher reversed Circular 10/65 on education in the UK that had been issued by the previous Labour Government.

Dunn (1994:24) indicates that the implementation of any policy starts with communicating the policy to stakeholders, more specifically to the practitioners or implementers of the policy. Dunn (1994:24) maintains that communicating the substance of the policy document to the practitioners will enhance the implementation stage, as practitioners will have the policy-relevant knowledge that is important for implementation. According to Van der Walt, Van Niekerk, Doyle, Knipe and Du Toit (2001:185) an important step in policy implementation involves the translation of policy into action by the practitioners. By implication this means that it is the responsibility of FET colleges to translate the FET policy into action. How they interpret policy and the type of college plans they will come up with will directly affect the quality of policy provision (Becher, 1981:153).

After policy has been interpreted, implementation plans need to be drawn. But how far can managers of colleges stretch in their planning? Do they have powers and authority to take decisions that are influenced by the unique contextual factors?

Holt (1987:99) warns that power plays a significant role when it comes to policy implementation. Centrally placed power creates problems for policy implementation. According to Holt (1987:99) power should not be concentrated centrally with politicians, but rather be distributed throughout the whole system, from national through to local agencies and schools. Nieuwenhuis (2004:4) advances this argument and refers to this devolution of power from a central point to other levels as decentralisation. It is Nieuwenhuis' (2004:4) contention that power and authority should be transferred from central government to the lower levels of government. Nieuwenhuis (2004:4) argues that the decentralization of power will not only strengthen the democratic process of governance, but will also ensure that services are provided more **efficiently and effectively** as the point of delivery will be closer to those who need the services.

Rondinelli, et al. (1990:89) further argues that managers of public institutions engage in strategic planning and according to them strategic planning is about taking decisions that impact on the organisation's operation. Developing strategic plans is a process that involves power and strategic planning at college level represents decentralised power or authority. For these plans to be recognised more power needs to be decentralised to colleges and managed by college councils.

Van der Walt, et al. (2002:185) points out that there is a belief in the policy arena that the actual implementation of public policy is the responsibility of public officials within government and that politicians are only held responsible for action or inaction of their departments. However, Hartwell (1994) does not agree with this view. According to Hartwell (1994:29) role-players within educational institutions are the actual implementers of government policy. It can therefore be stated that policy implementation is the responsibility of departmental officials as well as other role-players within the FET sector.

In the light of these conflicting ideas on who is actually responsible for the actual implementation of public policy Hartwell, (1994:29) suggests an encompassing view. According to Hartwell, (1994:29) dialogue is very crucial between and among role-players for change in education to be effective and meaningful. This view is also held by Dunn (1994) and he accentuates the importance of communication between and among role-players for the successful implementation of policy. According to Bowe and Gold (1992:6) the lack of dialogue in policy implementation only complicates this process further. Bowe and Gold (1992:6) argue that it is a fact that the views and opinions of heads of educational institutions, educators or the students remain silent during the process of policy formation and that these views and opinions can corroborate in order to ensure the successful implementation of policy.

Another problem that is prevalent during policy implementation is that of interpretation of the policy. Bowe and Gold (1992:13) point to the fact that policy is represented by text and this introduces another area of policy contestation. For Motala (2001:240), critical discourse analysis is necessary if the limits and possibilities of policies are to be understood. Motala (2001:242) indicates, “often the false assumption is made that because of ostensible agreement in the policy arena and niceties of the consensual statement about the goals to be achieved, there is no likelihood of conflicting interests in regard to the implementation of... policies”. Motala’s argument points to the issue of participation or consensus. Motala (2001:242) argues that consensus on policy statement does not mean there cannot be problems when the same policy is implemented. Every stakeholder during the policy making process has vested interests for his/her constituency. Each of these constituencies participates in the process of policy development in order to serve the interests of their respective constituencies. Lungu (2001:92) indicates that the assumption, that stakeholders who participate in the policy making process have the knowledge and skills about policy development and implementation, is not necessarily correct.

The essence of Motala's argument is that representatives of stakeholders may agree with a policy statement made during policy making, but because the participant has no knowledge and no expertise, problems could arise when implementation has to take place.

According to Bowe and Gold (1992:22) policy is not simply received and implemented by practitioners, they subject the policy text to interpretation and they recreate it. Meyer (1997:161) asserts that government officials in many instances have difficulty in interpreting public policy themselves. Bowe and Gold (1992:21) proves this in stating that the officials towards whom policy is aimed load texts with possibilities of misunderstandings and this is where problems for effective implementation may start. Bowe and Gold (1992:21) attribute this problem to the point that texts themselves can often be contradictory as key terms are sometimes used differently. Therefore the correct interpretation of public policy is of critical importance for effective implementation and this is in line with Motala's (2001) statement that critical discourse analysis is necessary if the limits and possibilities of policies are to be understood.

Literature abound that document the failure of policy implementation. Authors such as Jansen (2001), Manganyi (2001), Kraak (2002) and Young (2002) all claim that numerous studies have been undertaken in various educational contexts to try and determine why policy implementation is not what it ought to be. This study does not attempt to focus on the issue of policy failure, but rather to focus on the relationship between what was intended to be policy and what is in fact being implemented. It takes the debate back to the initial research that led to a policy document by interrogating the intentions and understandings of the "body of specialists" that constituted the appointed task team.

The original intentions and purpose of the policy imperatives will have to be determined. Therefore this study will first determine and analyze the understandings of the FET policy originators' perception and intentions with a policy document. Secondly, the perception and understanding of policy implementation at college level will be analysed in order to establish if the understanding of policy to be implemented are congruent with the intended policy.

Such an analysis must take cognizance of the adds-on that may have been designed at later stages after the initial research was done. Given the fact that the original Task Team members and the NBI researchers were appointed based on their assumed expert knowledge of the system it could be argued that political symbolism should not (or at least to a lesser degree) have played a major influencing role at the source of policy origination. Political symbolism, if it exists in the policies, must then have been brought in through the policy consultation and finalisation process that led to the publication of the White Paper. A distinct difference may therefore exist between the original intended policy and the policy delivered for implementation.

Similarly, a gap may also exist between the policy produced and the policy that is implemented, as implementers, when taking into accounts their own circumstances and context, may interpret the policy differently. This study could therefore reveal an important dimension of the policy development and implementation debate by interrogating the relationship between intended and implemented policy.

## 1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The underlying rationale in the preceding paragraphs is that implemented policy can (and probably will most often) differ from the intended policy. Kelly (2000:71) says that the partial or incorrect implementation of generated policy will always produce instability and wastage of resources. This study therefore asks the question:

What is the relationship between policy conceptualization, as perceived by policy originators and captured in policy origination documents, and the constructed understanding of policy as evidence in institutional management practices when policy is implemented in Further Education and Training colleges?

In order to address the above main question adequately, the following sub-questions need to be answered:

- How did policy originators perceive transformation at FET colleges as policy imperatives as articulated in the Green Paper?
- How did managers of FET institutions interpret the policy statements as expressed in the FET policy documents?

What were the challenges experienced by managers as they attempt to implement policy? It should be noted at this stage that the aim of this study is not to analyze the policy as such or the content of the policy, but to understand the hiatus between that which was perceived as needed to transform the FET sector and that which gets implemented and to understand the challenges faced as college managers implement the received policy.



## **1.6 AIM OF THE STUDY**

### **1.6.1 Research Aim and objectives**

The aim of this study is to understand the conceptualization of the FET policy, establish and then describe the relationship between government policy and management practices at college level in Gauteng. In order to realize the purpose of this study, the following research objectives need to be addressed:

- To reconstruct the original intention of the proposed FET policy from the originators' perspective;
- To construct an understanding of policy implementation from the implementers of policy's perspective; and
- Describe the relationship between conceptualized policy and implemented policy.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.7.1 The Research Strategies**

This study looks at the relationship between intended policy and policy implementation. To be able to establish the original understanding and intentions of the intended policy, it will be necessary to trace back the original meanings of policy. These meanings are located within the ideas of the experts who conducted the original research as is captured in policy statements made in the original report. To be able to trace back the original intentions will entail the analysis of these documents and communicating with the expert about their ideas.

This study is qualitative and the research approach that is adopted is inductive. According to Merriam and Simpson (1995:97) qualitative research methods allow researchers to uncover the meaning of phenomena for those involved.

Merriam and Simpson (1995:97) further state that the interaction of individuals in their social settings constructs what they call 'reality'. One of the purposes of qualitative studies is to describe how individuals interpret what they experience (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:98). This implies that researchers use qualitative research methods to delineate the process of making meaning by trying to understand the social context in which the experience takes place.

Merriam and Simpson (1995:99) say that in cases where there is still little knowledge about the problem under investigation an inductive strategy is normally used. The researcher's own perception, interpretations, descriptions and explanation will provide a better understanding of the problem and hence 'reality' or new knowledge around that problem will be constructed. The inductive approach is adopted in this study in order to be able to uncover the meaning the transformation of FET colleges has for the managers of these colleges. Consequently the reality prevalent at FET colleges in Gauteng will be established.

The research strategy that is adopted in this study is ethnographic. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:95) argue that a study that is set to investigate how research subjects interpret the social world is classified as ethnographic.

The research plan or strategy that will best answer the research question for this study is the survey. Initially an explorative survey will be used and as the study progress a questionnaire (used in the Delphi technique) will be used to further investigate the issues of policy development and implementation.

The foregoing paragraph locates this study within the constructivist paradigm. The thinking in this study is that reality is constructed socially. To understand the issues around policy development and implementation, social players need to be consulted and their discourse analyzed and interpreted. Therefore interpretations of meaning will be based on social discourse.

### **1.7.2 Units of Analysis**

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:164) introduce another important element and they argue that besides identifying the unit of analysis, the first step that a researcher needs to take is to identify what is called subjects. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:164) subjects are individuals who take part in the study. Members of the National Committee on Further Education (NCFE) and managers of FET colleges in Gauteng will constitute the subjects for this study.

Having identified participants, the next aspect to be looked at is the unit of analysis. According to Mouton and Marais (1990:38) unit of analysis refers to objects that are being studied. In this study document content and text will be the units of analysis. Neuman (2003:312) indicates that the unit of analysis in content analysis varies. Therefore content and discourse analysis will inform all interpretations in this study.

The next two paragraphs give a brief description of the unit analysis (i.e. the subjects and the objects).

- **Words/Content**

Examples that Neuman (2003:312) cites cover unit of analysis such as a word, a phrase, and a theme. This study will refer to words, mental pictures or constructs, and symbols as units of analysis.

- **Individuals**

In this study, members of the National Committee on Further Education (NCFE), National Institute for Community Education Trust (NICE), and the Reference Group for the Gauteng Situational Analysis study, FET colleges and their management will be a focus.

These members are experts and experts in this study will denote individuals who are knowledgeable about FET and/or work within the environment of FET colleges. Barbie (1992:13) says that experts are key informants in a study. These experts should be people who have engrossed themselves in the field of FET in their daily activities ([www.aaster.it/leonardo](http://www.aaster.it/leonardo)).

### **1.7.3 Data Collection**

#### **1.7.3.1 Collecting qualitative data**

This study will primarily collect qualitative data. In its qualitative approach the inductive theme of enquiry will be applied. Qualitative data will be collected using two different strategies. Official documents will be collected and analysed in order to establish an in-depth understanding of the policy issues raised in the documents (cf. Merriam & Simpson, 1995:100). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:43) in this type of enquiry the study is immersed in the details and specifics of the data with the purpose of discovering important categories, dimensions and interrelationship of these data. A qualitative document analysis (Mouton, 2001:165; cf. van Dalen, 1979:290) will be used to collect data from the following documents and others that might be published during the course of this study.

- ❖ Green Paper on FET (RSA, 1998a)
- ❖ The report to the Head of Education on “A situational Analysis of FET institutions in the Gauteng Province.

The above-mentioned documents will be used to identify texts in the form of policy statements that address FET college transformation and implementation thereof in FET colleges in particular in Gauteng. This data will cover issues around policy imperatives on implementing policy on transformation of FET colleges. The data will be in the form of policy statements and recommendations from the analysed documents.

The main aim of the inclusion of these documents is to determine the key issues that are directly linked to the management of FET colleges and the recommendations made in policy documents to improve these management challenges. Once these key aspects are identified, the policy intentions underpinning the recommendations can be interrogated.

The semi-structured interview will be used as a research strategy and an interview schedule will be used to collect research data. The interview schedule will cover policy imperatives on management practices in relation to the transformation of FET colleges as identified in policy statement and recommendations in the analysed policy documents on FET colleges. The purpose of the interview schedule will be to establish clarity on central principal of policy statements as perceived by these experts and the implication of these policies on management practices at college level.

The research design of this study will be qualitative. The purpose of the study is to understand and then explain the relationship between policy origination and implementation from the role-players themselves and in their context.

To be able to understand and then describe this relationship the study needs to focus on policy development events (procedures and processes) taking into consideration documents written about FET colleges and then interviewing policy developers on these documented assertions.

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:382; cf. Merriam & Simpson, 1995:100) qualitative data analysis cannot be standardised. Data will be analysed, as the process of data collection is in progress, in order to allow the researcher to make adjustments along the way. Collected data will be explored to establish which themes or issues to follow up and to focus on. According to Saunders, et al. (2000:392) it is important in this strategy for the researcher to examine data in order to assess which themes are emerging from the data collection process.

In summary the main focus of analysis in this study will be on analysing qualitative data. Discourse analysis will be the primary strategy for data analysis in this study. In trying to define discourse analysis Karasavvidis (2001:1; Lewis, 2002:1) says that this concept means analysing the language beyond the sentence. Discourse analysis involves interpreting a given text corpus taking the context of the text with the aim to reveal hidden motivations behind the texts through interpretation. Discourse analysis will enable the researcher in this study to understand the problems hidden in the policy texts (<http://fiat.gslis.utexas.edu/>).

Using discourse analysis on its own will not eventually assist this study to provide answers to the research question. Hermeneutics is a method that will be coupled with discourse analysis to eventually assist reaching conclusions regarding the research problem. Hermeneutics is knowledge that allows researchers to make sense of data by interpreting the written word (<http://fiat.gslis.utexas.edu/>). Hermeneutics emphasises rules, interpretations and the meaning of people's social lives (<http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology>).

Researchers often use hermeneutics to attempt to understand meaning in a given context. This study will use hermeneutics in an attempt to understand the meaning behind policy statements from both the originators and the implementers of policy in the colleges in Gauteng.

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to make sense of how policy originators perceived the policy needed to transform FET colleges as compared to the experiences of managers as they implement received policy. It is accepted that the process from policy origination to policy implementation is not linear, but tends to be a messy to-and-fro process of consultation and negotiation between various stakeholders. That which was perceived as required may not be the same as that which was received and may for this very reason assist us in understanding whether that which gets lost in the process may impact negatively on that which is received. For this reason I will not analyze the policy developed but will simply describe it as part of the context. My analysis is thus limited to that which was perceived as required at the point of origination and that which was received. Even in this regard it must be stressed that the study is limited by the fact that only the views of those committee members who were willing to participate were solicited. Secondly, only managers from colleges in Gauteng were used as part of the sample. The results emanating from this study cannot be generalized to all FET colleges but it does provide us with an understanding of what get lost in the process from policy origination to policy implementation. .

## **1.9 CHAPTER REVIEW**

In this chapter the relationship between government policy and management practices at college level in the transformation of Further Education and Training was introduced. Different concepts that relate to public policy and the research strategies to be used in this study were outlined. Management capacity is important for the successful implementation of government policies within FET colleges in Gauteng. On the other hand the lack of capacity can lead to the non-implementation thereof. Coupled with management capacity is political symbolism that was identified as an important aspect that can also lead to the non-implementation of government policy.

It is the objective of this study to establish what the relationship is between government policy and management practices at college level at FET colleges in Gauteng. Research methods and strategies that will lead this study to the achievement of its aim were identified and outlined in this chapter. Chapter 2 will focus on policy conceptualisation and implementation.

After outlining the problem setting, aim and method of investigation, the rest of the outline is as follows:

- ❖ Chapter 2 will deal with Further Education and Training Policy formulation and how it is communicated to FET colleges;
- ❖ Chapter 3 will focus on the international perspective in further education and training policy
- ❖ Chapter 4 will concentrate on the research design;
- ❖ Chapter 5 will be empirical investigation by means of the Delphi technique;
- ❖ Chapter 6 will be the conclusion and the summary of the study.