

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the methodological structure, that is, how data was collected to examine the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools. This includes the instruments used for this study.

In accordance with the topic of this study, the researcher found the qualitative method suitable for data collection. A brief research design is discussed below.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is a general plan or blueprint of the investigation which the researcher uses to obtain evidence to answer the research questions (De Vos; Strydom; Fouche; Poggenpoel; Schurink & Schurink, 1998:80).

Mouton (1996:107) defines the research design as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in order to reach a certain goal. The guidelines include the aim of the research, the selection and design of a particular method, and the consideration of validity.

Considering the ideas of these authors, it is clear that the design of the research includes the overall approach to be taken and how the research will be done. I

did mention in the introductory paragraph that the qualitative research method is the one that has been selected for gathering data on how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools.

According to Brotherson (1994:103), qualitative research design is characterised by three key assumptions. The first assumption is the belief that multiple constructions of reality exist, so qualitative research will seek to find an understanding of human relationships in the web of interaction and interconnected factors, events and processes as they are constructed in the minds of people. This is an important aspect to consider for this study, as the issues of the learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools, especially in the classroom, are interconnected within human relationships and, as such, have multiple realities.

Secondly, in qualitative research the inquirer and the participant interact and influence each other on a certain extent. The qualitative research methods that are used in this study, such as observations, individual and focus-group interviews, allow for interaction and could lead to understanding attitudes, behaviours and context from different points of view (Platton in Richard, 2003:11). Thirdly, in qualitative research truth is believed to be primarily a matter of perspective. Considering the varied experiences the participants have had in a learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools, the above assumption is considered to be relevant. Roy (1991:105) asserts that qualitative techniques are based on valuing personal understanding above allowing the numbers to speak to themselves.

It is important to note the demographic composition of the educators who were involved in the process of the interviews in both schools which reflect as set out below.

In school A – three educator participants were all females that is:

educator A was a White female offered Afrikaans;
educator B was a Black female offered IsiZulu; and
educator C was a White female offered English.

In school B it happened spontaneously that I interviewed three male educators and they are being categorised as follows:

educator A was a Black male who taught IsiZulu;
educator B was a Coloured male teaching Afrikaans; and
educator C was a White male teaching English.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

According to Rudestam and Newton (1992:31), qualitative research implies that data is in the form of words, and that are (data) reduced to themes or categories and thus evaluated subjectively. Since I intend studying the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools, I have decided to use individual interviews in or from the first school and, individual as well as focus-group interviews in or from the second school with which interviews will both be in the form of words, but I will reduce data which are collected to themes or categories will be evaluated objectively due to the sensitivity of the theme itself. This qualitative research method (objective evaluation) will be more likely to address the aim and purpose of this study.

In qualitative research, I tend to become involved with the phenomenon. A qualitative researcher is at times prepared to be part of that which is being studied (Mouton & Marais, 1990:163).

According to Cresswell (1994:162), qualitative research occurs in natural settings, where human behaviour and events normally occur. The focus of

qualitative research is on the participant in the original setting. In this research, educators' and learners' perceptions about the theme will be considered, as I am interested in a broad understanding of how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools. It is important for me to mention that much as the focus is on a learner and educator interaction, it also includes how a learner becomes involved in and outside the classroom. It is again important to note that, how a learner and educator interact inside and outside the classroom, might have positive or negative implications, depending on the outcomes of the interviews.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:10) describe qualitative research as “a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definition of the situation.” Most of the ex-Model C schools in Johannesburg (district eleven) have transformed themselves into multi-cultured whereby Black, Coloured, White and Indian learners are found in the same school. I therefore, accept that multiple realities of a learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools may exist. It is vital to note that the understanding of the events, as well as people in their natural state without taking anything for granted, is important.

Qualitative research can be objective as the researcher involves her/himself in the situation or immerses her/himself in the persons she/he is studying, but is nevertheless able to objectively transfer this information in the data with depth and detail (Charmaz in Silverman, 1997:10). In doing as above I am trying to represent the person's view or situation fairly and portray it as consistent with their meaning. Richard (2003:80) argues that collaboration with other researchers may retard the process but is necessary in the area of research.

The above-mentioned argument is relevant to this study in the sense that 'multiculturalism' in Johannesburg (district eleven) schools is an interactive concept portraying the way in which people react or perceive situations. It was therefore, important for me to be aware of this at all times, and the qualitative

research design, together with other methods of data collection, was helpful in obtaining different perspectives.

Qualitative studies are those where the description of data is not easily expressed in quantitative terms. The researcher gathered data through individual interviews, focus-group interviews and observations. Limited measurement was involved as exists in quantitative research. The qualitative paradigm is appropriate in this study, as the researcher produces findings without reducing them to statistics (Best & Kahn, 1986:147, cited in Richard, 2003:80).

The research was explorative in essence and very little information was known before research processes took place. Perceptions and attitude in relation to the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools in and outside the classroom cannot be adequately measured using quantitative methods. Although instruments may be available, it is still not an ideal method of measurement. It was relevant for me to use a variety of methods such as interviews and observations that might determine attitudes and perceptions.

3.2.2 Method used for data collection

Data collection methods are the ways in which the research data are obtained (De Vos, et al., 1998:82). I have collected data from the two multicultural secondary schools with which school A is fifteen kilometres from the other, but in the same district eleven. The reason for selecting two schools with such a distance difference is to determine if schools in the same geographical areas differ in the way the learners are involved and how the multicultural schools influence the involvement. I first observed (in both school A and B) the lesson presentation from the morning until the afternoon (13h40), and then started with the individual interviews with learners. Educators were interviewed during their free periods whenever I had finished with learners. For how participants were selected, please refer to 3.3.2. This process lasted for a period of a week in each

school. The differences with school B was that after I had completed the individual interviews, I decided also to conduct focus-group interviews, something which was not done in school A. The reason for conducting both individual and focus-group interviews in school B was that, I wanted to ensure the certainty of the data collected in individual interviews together with what I observed during the lesson presentations. It was necessary to do focus-group interviews in the second school because the situations were similar in both schools. The focus-group assisted in clarifying issues and getting certainty about some of the issues. Therefore, I wanted to gather more data from different learners, and that gave me confidence in the data collected.

It is important to note that individual interviews involved only the grade twelve learners in both schools and for focus-group interviews in school B, only the grade eleven learners. The reason that I selected the grade eleven's was that I had doubts that if I selected grade twelve learners for focus-group interviews, those who were engaged in the individual interviews might inform the focus-group learners about the questions to be asked in the interview sessions and hence, a neutral group was needed.

I perceived learners from both schools as being senior learners who could provide me with the information relevant to the study. Using more than one research method played a major role in that the information gathered the first time, could be confirmed and strengthened by that gathered the second or the third time. The following methods, namely observation; individual and focus-group interviews, are discussed below.

3.2.2.1 Observations (unstructured)

Observations occur in a naturalistic setting without using predetermined categories of responses. Observations were used to investigate and clarify the research setting (Mertens, 1998:317). For this study I preferred this type of

observation because “unstructured observations call upon the researcher to note activities, events and people systematically” (Chambers, 1992:297).

The observations were unstructured in the sense that I observed learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools from the moment I entered the school gate, and proceeded to the reception and to the classrooms. Mertens (1998:317) says unstructured observations occur in a naturalistic setting without using predetermined categories of responses. Prior arrangements were made for a school visit. The first day of arrival in school A, I was warmly welcomed by the receptionist who later called the lady principal. The principal then came and assigned one lady educator to allocate me to different classes on different days. The lady educator then allocated me to classes of three different languages (that is, IsiZulu, Afrikaans and English). I did not observe classes of my choice, but I was accompanied to those classes on different days by the lady delegated to perform that task (a white lady educator).

It is worth noting that on the first day, after the lady educator presented me to the subject educator of IsiZulu, one of the black boys threw a piece of paper throughout a window next to which I was standing. The subject educator (who is a black lady) when asked who had done that, learners in class identified him. The educator took that boy learner to the principal’s office. The boy was told to bring his parents along the next day. The boy came with his mother the following day. I was called and the educator related to the boy’s mother what had transpired the previous day. The boy was made to apologise to me and the educator, and promised not to repeat the same mistake. Even though the boy had apologised, his classes were suspended for three weeks and he had to serve the (detention) punishment by doing the garden.

I felt pity for the boy, because I did not take it as negatively as the educator took it. For my observations, that was a harsh decision to take for such an offence.

Another thing that I had observed in school A is that no learner is allowed to move outside classes during teaching and learning periods. Every learner has a diary whereby his/her behaviour (good or bad) and progress are recorded. For example, whenever a learner leaves the classroom for a particular purpose, the educator who is present at that moment, signs the diary so that even if a learner meets with another educator outside, he or she (the learner) should be in a position to produce a diary which indicated that he or she has been granted permission to be where he or she is. If a learner is found outside without a 'diary', he or she is put on detention list which means he or she has to do a certain duty for a certain period every day after school. I perceived that as a good method of maintaining a sustainable discipline which had a considerable and positive influence on classroom situations.

The welcome which was given to me by the receptionist in school B was not as warm and impressive as in school A. In school B, I waited for twenty minutes before the receptionist attended to me and again waited for three hours before seeing the principal of the school who later referred me to the deputy principal who was a lady. I was very disappointed by the treatment I received, especially when I compared that with how I was welcomed in school A.

The purpose of this study is to examine how learner involvement takes place in an interactive process of multicultural education in secondary schools. For this reason, I had an opportunity to do classroom observations in the selected multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg (Gauteng-district eleven). The major area on which the classroom observation focused on was the interaction between learners and educators during presentation of the lessons, and also to observe how learners become involved in the classroom activities and subsequently to observe how learners become involved in the extra-mural activities such as sports. I was first placed in the IsiZulu class where there were four different ethnic groups, that is, black, coloured, whites and Indian learners. A visit to both schools (A and B) where there were differences in the interaction

between learners and educators in and outside the classroom, was an interesting exposure for me. All subjects were presented in English, as the medium of instruction was said to be English, except during the Afrikaans period where the subject was presented in Afrikaans. Secondly, I was placed in an Afrikaans second language class where all four racial groups mentioned before were present, and lastly, I was placed in an English second language class. These allocations took place on different days. I saw learners of different racial groups (that is, black, coloured, whites and Indians) sat in groups and interacted with ease in the classrooms.

The classroom observations, therefore, assisted me to gather additional information on the integration of learning area, group work, use of the resources, and learners' responses towards the lessons presented, which answered most of the questions reflected on the interview schedule. These observations gave me first hand information about what transpires in multi-cultured classrooms. In each of the classrooms, I was able to gather a list of additional information at the end of each day. I also had an opportunity to have personal interaction with multicultural situations in action. Despite the fact that learners and educators differed in their interaction in the classrooms as well as in sports, the events during observations enhanced my understanding on the various facets of how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools; interaction which clearly indicates how a learner becomes involved in his/her school activities.

During break time, learners sat in multicultural groups and enjoy their lunch-boxes. During sports days, they shared sport activities together, sports such as volley ball, tennis and rugby. Those are the most popular activities that I had observed. In school A, they had their 'assembly' on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10h20 to 10h40.

Observing how 'assembly' was conducted in a multicultural school in Johannesburg, was an interesting and inspiring moment for me. After the

scripture had been read by one educator, learners sang the National Anthem, 'Nkosi Sike leli' Africa in Sesotho, Zulu, English and also in Afrikaans. All learners sang with enthusiasm and with powerful voices. I was impressed to realise how multiculturalism had impacted on the relationship among learners and educators. That action proved South Africa to be a democratic country in action since the year 1994. I am certain that I am right in assuming that before the April 1994, during the apartheid regime, blacks, whites, coloured and Indians would not be registered in the same school, hence schools were separated according to racial classifications (that is, schools for blacks, coloured, whites and Indians).

3.2.2.2 Individual interview as a research method

The interview was semi-structured because I did not only focus on the questions prepared prior to the interviews, but I asked additional questions to gain more clarity on what is being studied, which allowed for open discussion. "Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They can be used both to given and receive information."

Individual interviews were semi-structured. Seeing that I wanted to learn more about the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools, I did not only focus on my interviews schedule but also asked question randomly for clarity where I did not understand during the process of interviews (see Appendices A and B).

An interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people (but sometimes involving more) i.e. directed by one party in order to get information from another (Bogdam & Bikklen, 1992:96).

In qualitative research, interviews may be used in two ways: they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques. In all of these situations, the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words for the researcher to develop insight into the ways subjects interpret an aspect of the world (Bogdam & Bikklen, 1992:96).

It is important to mention that although I did not stipulate time frame for individual interviewees, each took thirty to thirty five minutes in each school whereas the focus-group took an hour. Individual interviews in school A and B involved the grade twelve learners (boys and girls), and the focus-group in school B only involved the grade eleven learners. For more clarity on this issue please refer to 3.2.2.

Altrichter (1993:101) emphasises the fact that an interview is a conversation between two people which is not casual or non-directive, as its purpose is for the interviewer to seek responses from the interviewee. Interviews give access to other people's perceptions, including the thoughts and attitudes that lie behind behaviour. It is for this reason that interviews were used in this study, because an interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools is often a difficult topic to raise, doing it conversationally while at the same time directing the participant to achieve the necessary responses. However, the interviewee only reveals what she or he thinks and her or his interpretations at the time of the interview. This leads me to the discussion of focus-group interviews.

3.2.2.3 Focus-group interviews

Krueger (1994:6) defines focus-group interview as "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment." Focus-group interviews are one of the best qualitative research techniques to use in examining an interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools in the Johannesburg

(Gauteng – district eleven) schools. After individual interviews were conducted for a week (after school) in school A, I travelled fifteen kilometres to school B, where I also conducted individual interviews for three days (that is, Monday to Wednesday) and then conducted focus-group interviews for two days (that is, from Thursday to Friday).

The focus-group interview schedule which I prepared prior to the interview session, is set out in Appendix B. Open-ended questions were asked based on the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools. The interview was tape-recorded to avoid forgetting and mixing of valuable information gathered. I tape-recorded the interviews with the permission of the respondents and also transcribed them (transcripts will appear in Appendix C as a sample copy of a focus-group interview). I did not place any time constraints on the responses. As a result, responses were fully and clearly explained and learners were focused on the questions asked. In their enthusiasm they all wanted to respond to the question asked the same time, especially when they all shared the same ideas. It is important to note that interviews conducted in both multicultural schools were conducted in English, as the medium of instruction in both schools is English.

Through focus-group the researcher was able to expand the information gathered from individual interviews in school A. The focus-group in this research consisted of twenty-four learners, that is, eight blacks (4 boys and 4 girls), eight coloureds (4 boys and 4 girls) and eight whites (4 boys and 4 girls). Questions for focus-group interviews were prepared prior to the interview session. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:200) and De Vos, et al. (1998:323) stress the importance of presenting questions in a conversational manner. They emphasise that the questions should be direct and simply put. They further emphasise that questions be ordered from the more general to the more specific, and that the questions of greater significance must be placed at the beginning and those of lesser significance near the end. They conclude the paragraph by mentioning

that it is vital that positive and less threatening questions are asked before the sensitive questions. This is what I have tried to maintain when formulated the interview schedule.

Both individual and focus-group interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

3.3 SAMPLE

Hardyk and Petrinovich (cited in Richard, 2003:88) define a sample as “those members of a given population on whom instruments were used to obtain relevant data.” This sample was a stratified purposive sample, in other words, there gender, race and culture balanced, specifically applied to grade eleven and twelve learners. Purposive sampling increases the likelihood that the variable common in a social phenomenon will be present in the data gathered (Gillham, 2000:12). The vital role that the qualitative researcher should play is when he or she has to decide on the sample of participants to be selected for the investigation. De Vos, et al. (1998:253) emphasise that the participants formed an integral part in the selection of the sample for this study. I will now focus on the schools selected for the research.

3.3.1 The selected schools

Two multicultural secondary schools were selected as follows: They are both situated in Johannesburg-Gauteng Province in district eleven. They are presently known as ex-Model C schools.

3.3.1.1 Selection of school A (purposive and convenient)

I selected one (school A of the two) multicultural secondary school with a purpose. I selected it because I had a lady friend whom I knew, and I thought that through her, (friend) I would have access to the school to gather the

information needed. This school (A) was convenient to reach and one could reach it with public transport if one did not have one's own transport.

This school is situated in a high-class socio-economic and multi-cultured area (even though Whites are in the majority). The area influenced the climate of the school.

Even though efforts were made to make the sample representative, the concept of generalisability had to be considered, as the sample was restricted to one education district. There are eight (8) schools in the above-mentioned district. These two multicultural secondary schools are the best academic performing schools with regard to matriculation results and the development of the schools in general.

To maintain the anonymity of the selected schools, I preferred to name the first school, school A, and the second one school B. The same method was applied to all participants. Due to the time constraints of the study, I confined it to two multicultural secondary schools in order to ascertain the validity of the study.

To provide a clear picture of how the two selected multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg-district eleven are composed, I tabulated the composition of both schools' learners and educators below, starting with school A.

3.3.1.2 Composition of school (A) learners and educators

I have made mention earlier on that the medium of instruction in both schools is English, therefore, English was the medium of communication until the end of interview processes.

Learners: 1500 = 900 girls and 600 boys.

Educators: 45 = 40 government paid educators with female principal inclusive.
5 school governing body paid female educators.

3.3.1.3 Number of learners and educators from different home language

Learners: 650 - Whites → 200 = Afrikaans speaking
450 = English speaking

500 - Blacks → 300 = Sesotho speaking (South Sotho)
60 = SeTswana speaking
80 = IsiZulu speaking
50 = Sepedi speaking (North Sotho)
10 = Venda speaking

250 - Indians

100 - Coloured

Educators: 10 - Males 6 = Whites = English and Afrikaans speaking
2 = Indians
2 = Blacks } 1 Zulu speaking
 } 1 Sesotho speaking

35 - Females 25 = Whites = 15 = Afrikaans/English speaking
10 = English speaking only

4 = Blacks } 2 Zulu speaking
 } 2 SeSotho speaking

4 = Indians

2 = Coloured

3.3.1.4 Criteria for selection of learners for individual interviews – school A

Learners who took part in the investigations in the selected multicultural secondary school were senior learners (grade twelve) who had registered for the three languages (that is, English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu). The reason for selecting interview learners who were doing these languages was that I wanted to verify what I had observed in the classrooms during the lesson presentations. The criteria applied for selecting learners was that, out of twenty-four learners selected from each school, twelve learners must be boys and the other twelve girls. I selected learners of the age seventeen and eighteen (17 and 18 – 12 per age group). The reason for selecting these age groups was that these learners have life experience and are aware of political and social issues.

Twelve learners in each group had to be divided in such a way that six of them were the best performing and the other six the poor performing. The idea of dividing them that way was that I wanted to ensure the accuracy of the information I had gathered from all the participants. Referring to the selection of grade twelve learners in the above paragraph, the idea that I had was that, as senior learners they might have the advantage of being able to provide me with all the relevant information concerning what was being studied because they had been there longer than the learners in grade eight and nine.

As mentioned prior in the sample of schools selected that the anonymity of the schools and participants will be maintained, the researcher will therefore, name learners by letters of the alphabet. This has been done to collect sufficient data from learners of different racial groups and also to enhance the authenticity of the data gathered on each group. The sample of all participants will be analysed carefully in chapter four.

3.3.1.5 Criteria for selection of educators (for observations and individual interviews)

Still in school A, the educators who took part in the investigations were senior subject educators who happened to have taught the grade eleven and twelve learners for three successive years and were still involved in the same grades. The motive behind this idea was that these educators knew learners of the school better than the educators who met learners for the first time, that is, how learners are being influenced in the classrooms through the interaction with the educators.

I observed three language educators during their lesson presentation. This concerns languages such as English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu. It must be noted that in this school A, I observed and interviewed three female educators (in senior classes).

3.3.1.6 Selection of school B – (not purposive)

In school B, which is the second selected school, I did not have anyone whom I knew before, but I had an interest in the school as one of the multicultural schools in Johannesburg - district eleven. The area in which the school is situated is Coloured dominated, followed Blacks with the minority of whites. The socio-economic situation of the school is middle-class, which is highly influenced by the environment. The school has registered learners from three racial groups, namely, coloured, blacks and whites, with educators of the same racial groups. At first I did not have any idea about the relationships in the school until I was engaged in the observations and interview processes, although the selection of the school was not purposive.

This study enriched the researcher's knowledge concerning how a multicultural school (particularly) in the classroom had an influence on learner involvement.

3.3.1.7 Composition of school (B) learners and educators

The medium of instruction is English and therefore, English is being used for communication in all the processes.

Learners: 1400 = 844 girls and 556 boys.

Educators: 35 = 35 government paid educators with male principal inclusive.

3.3.1.8 Number of learners and educators from different home languages

Learners: 900 - Coloured
350 - Blacks

150 = IsiZulu speaking
95 = Sesotho speaking (South Sotho)
50 = Setswana speaking
30 = Tsonga speaking
35 = Xhosa speaking
20 = North Sotho speaking

150 - Whites 120 = English speaking only
30 = English/Afrikaans

Educators: 15 - Males 8 = Coloured

4 = Blacks	2 Zulu speaking
	1 Sesotho speaking
	1 Setswana speaking

3 = Whites = all Afrikaans and English speaking

20 - Females 10 = Coloured English and Afrikaans speaking

6 = Blacks } 3 Zulu speaking
 } 2 Xhosa speaking
 } 1 SeSotho speaking

4 = Whites = Afrikaans and English speaking

3.3.1.9 Criteria for selection of learners (for individual interviews and focus-group-school B)

Learners who took part in the investigations in the selected multicultural secondary school (B) were senior learners (grade twelve) who had registered for the three languages (that is, English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu). Ages of learners who participated were the same as those in school A. For more clarification on the reason for selecting the grade twelve learners, as well as the criteria for selecting them, please refer to sub-heading 3.3.1.4.

I observed the lesson, presentations in the mornings and conducted individual interviews in the afternoons for three successive days (that is, from Monday to Wednesday) and thereafter (Thursday and Friday), I conducted focus-group interviews. Special attention should be paid to the fact that I only conducted individual interviews with the grade twelve learners, and later was involved in the focus-group interviews with grade eleven learners (the same number as that of the grade twelves refer to 3.3.1.4). Learners who participated in focus-group interviews were all sixteen (16) years of age. They were selected for this type of interviews because I felt that they (learners) have life experience and are also aware of political and social issues. Again, I selected grade eleven learners

because they were not involved in the individual interviews and that they would not be aware of the interview schedule.

I conducted focus-group interviews after I had conducted individual interviews. The reason for doing that was to enable me to gather more information on the subject being studied and also to ensure authentic results on how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools.

3.3.1.10 Criteria for selection of educators (school B) for observations and individual interviews

The educators who took part in the investigations in this multicultural secondary school were senior subject educators who happened to have taught grade eleven and twelve learners for three successive years and were still involved in the same grades. Educators in school B were selected the same way as those in school A.

I observed three language educators during their lesson presentation (that is: English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu). Fortunately, race, gender and culture balanced automatically without any difficulty.

3.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Validity is concerned with whether what one is measuring is what one really intends to measure. Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of measures (Rose & Sullivan, 1996:19).

Voght (1993:65) states clearly that “when repeated measurements of the same thing gives identical or very similar results, the measurement instrument is said to be reliable. For example, if you climbed on your bathroom scale and it reads 75 kilograms, you climbed off and on again and it reads 72 kilograms, repeated the

process and it reads 77 kilograms, your scale would not be very reliable.” He continues, “if however, in a series of weightings, you obtained the same answer (75 kilograms), your scale would be reliable. Suppose you knew that you actually weigh 70 kilograms then your scale may be reliable but is not accurate (valid).”

When one attempts to examine the interaction between learners and educators in multicultural in secondary schools using semi-structured research methods, it is important that it is valid and reliable.

Silverman (in Hall & Hall, 1996:209) propose that it is important to pre-test interviews to discover whether the same results can be reproduced to claim validity. In this research, the pilot study and sample used independently with the same method of interviews with educators and learners in both schools, have allowed me to emphasise the validity of the claims when examining the data.

It is vital to mention that the visits and the observation processes that I have undergone was on a short-term basis. The first day's visits to both schools were unannounced to the learners therefore, they could not stage their relationships and the interactions in the class and especially on the school grounds during breaks.

With the educators, the principal did inform them in their staff meeting that I would be in their midst for a short period (1 week) for the purpose of my studies. I do not want to believe that the seating in both schools was influenced by the notification of my visit. I believe that the seating arrangements in the classrooms were done long before my visit, the answer that the seating was long being arranged to be like that since the beginning of the year and that is their culture at the school to sit like that.

It is important to note that I first conducted interviews with the educators individually in both schools (A + B), and secondly with learners. A focus-group

interview was done only with school B and with the grade eleven learners, not with the grade twelve learners as in the individual interviews. A semi-structured method was used to ensure an in-depth examination of what is being studied.

Examining the interaction between learners and educators in and outside the classroom in multicultural schools is a very sensitive subject and participants may feel obliged to respond in a particular manner. To ensure accurate data, different methods of data collection should be applied to achieve triangulation. Gurek (in Gillham, 2000:93) confirms this by saying the implication for assessing the validity of interview data is that interviews need to be part of a multi-method approach.

A reflective activity, observation in classroom and in sports were also used to examine whether there was a change of perception with regards to the interaction between multi-cultured learners and educators. Group and individual activity during data collection was also a significant strategy as participants were actively engaged. To maintain the reliability and validity of this study, a reflection of participant responses in the group, as well as in the individual activity, was recorded.

3.5 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics is a set of moral principles that offers behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards participants (De Vos, et al., 1998:24). Ethics in research plays an integrated part of the research planning and the implementation process (Mertens, 1998:23).

In the first sample multicultural school, I found that there were four racial groups (namely blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians) and in the second sample multicultural schools there were three racial groups (namely blacks, coloureds

and Whites). The ethical issue on which I want to focus is that of 'blacks' which I know and understand best.

It is worth noting that in the black racial group, one finds the following ethnic groups namely Zulus, South Sothos, North Sotho, Tswanas, Vendas, Tsongas, Swazi's and Xhosas. I will therefore elaborate briefly about each of the abovementioned ethnic group.

It is vital to clarify to the reader the meaning of 'tradition' and 'culture' before elaborating further on the ethical issues of each ethnic group. These two concepts seem to be confusing, especially to other racial groups besides that of blacks, hence clarification is important.

When blacks talk of 'tradition' they are referring to their dress code and the songs they sing and how they dance to the songs during their celebrations. 'Culture' refers to the manner in which things are done on that day of celebration (for example weddings, feasts and so on) as well as their standard of living.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter three focused on how the research was designed, showing that a qualitative research method was preferred with regard to data collection for this study. Different methods such as individual interviews, focus-group interviews, observations were applied during the process of data gathering, and I clearly outlined them. The sample of schools visited, how educators and learners were selected, are discussed in this chapter. The validity and the reliability of the information gathered, have also been confirmed through different methods applied.