

CHAPTER 1

Introduction, problem statement, aim, methodology and programme of research

"Resiliency is the happy knack of being able to bungy jump through the pitfalls of life, armed to rebound when things get low to maintain a sense of who you are as a person"

(Fuller, 2001:40)

1.1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a country rich in historical, cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity as well as different socio-economic rankings. In recent times, there has been a growing trend towards cultivating these diversities, focusing on the strengths of middle adolescents' functioning within their various ecosystems and uplifting the community as part of the African Renaissance. The paradoxical ambience and political, economic and social condition that are currently being experienced in the country was created by the rapid changes since 1994, when South Africa obtained a new democracy. These changes have had an enormous impact on the community. There has been a wealth of new opportunities for development in all sectors, but it also brings various stressors of a changing society. These changes are also pervading into the lives of the middle adolescents, who are already challenged by the physical, cognitive, affective, social, emotional and aesthetic changes inherent to their developmental stage. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:15) quote Burman, Reynolds, Dawes and Donald who are of the opinion that: *"the challenges that South Africa faces encompasses the full extent of social reconstruction. All the issues resulting thereof has significant effects on the development of children and the development of the contextual disadvantaged, social problems and special needs"*. This view reiterates the importance that the social context plays in influencing the middle adolescents' life and their ability to bounce back against the changes and challenges of living in a diverse society. The middle adolescents function within an ecosystem that

includes the family, school, community and society as a whole, which is linked in a dynamic, interdependent and interacting relationship and therefore the role they play in the wellbeing of middle adolescents needs to be taken into consideration.

The National Commission on special needs in education and training in association with the National Committee on support services (1997:12) compiled essential changes and barriers to learning and development with which the South African middle adolescent is currently being challenged in their various social contexts. The first is in the socio-economic sphere that includes urban and rural disparities, the level of access to basic services, poverty and underdevelopment, all forms of abuse, discrimination, stigmatisation and the lack of a supportive infrastructure, violence and crime as well as sickness such as human immunosuppressive virus (HIV) and (acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)). The second change is in the nature of the school curriculum, parental involvement in the learning process as well as views on disabilities. A change in legislation, policies and support services, which focuses on children and adolescents' rights, can also have a great influence on them. Global changes resulting in technological advancements and faster information processing are also placing increasing pressure on today's middle adolescents to mature at a faster rate than was the case in previous generations. The above-mentioned changes and barriers could affect the middle adolescent's wellbeing. Due to differences and levels of regulatory skills (resiliency), changes can have a positive or negative influence on a middle adolescent. Benard (1995:1) is of opinion that all middle adolescents are born with an innate capacity to successfully overcome life's difficulties, in other words to be resilient. Therefore, if middle adolescents have the capacity to become resilient it is the role of the significant role players in the middle adolescents' contexts to be involved in developing, enhancing and fostering resilience in the youth.

Resilience can be seen as the capability of middle adolescents and ecosystems (family, school, community or society) to cope and rebound (bounce back) in the face of significant adversity, risk, trauma or stress. This concept is reiterated by Benard's (1997:2) definition of resilience which she states as follows: "*resilience is an accumulating matrix of capacities, resources, strengths, knowledge and adaptive skills that continues to grow over time, which equips an adolescent to cope despite personal vulnerabilities and adversities brought about by environmental conditions*". This implies that resilience develops through gradual exposure to difficulties and stresses at a manageable level of intensity. As mentioned previously, South African middle adolescents are exposed to numerous environments riddled with potential risks and problems. Psychological services responding to these middle adolescents have often functioned within a deficit model where a problem first has to arise and then rectification and rehabilitation of inharmonious relationships can begin.

Due to this deficit model the recognition of middle adolescents' capacities and strengths are not always utilized to guide the middle adolescent to optimal wellbeing. The essential tasks of Educational Psychology must therefore focus on prevention that takes into account the middle adolescents' developmental phase and not just rectification and rehabilitation of inharmonious relationships within the ecosystemic context. A paradigm shift is necessary to focus on the middle adolescent's strengths and assets. Adhering to, and focusing on, the middle adolescent's anthropological essences will foster the transition. One significant anthropological essence includes knowing that the middle adolescent is unique with immense potential for development. The asset-based approach displaces the emphasis on the deficits and weaknesses because it focuses on the assets, strengths and capacities found in the individual and social context. The asset-based approach therefore include a strong focus on the present assets and strengths of the middle adolescent, a belief in active participation of middle adolescents in their own wellbeing as well as an emphasis on creating auspicious relationships that can motivate the middle adolescent to address

barriers and needs in their lives. Ebersöhn and Eloff (2003:21) identified the following domains and assets as basis to identify assets within middle adolescents:

- ❖ *"Cognitive characteristics: memory, attention, observation skills, planning, reflection, visualisation, metacognition and problem solving.*
- ❖ *Emotive characteristics: caring, coping, passion, support, adaptability and recognising feelings.*
- ❖ *Behavioural characteristics: making friends, networking, pro-activity, vision, goal setting, learning from living, integrity, leadership, interpersonal skills.*
- ❖ *Life skills: self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, self-confidence, influential skills and survival skills."*

The above-mentioned assets and strengths identified by Ebersöhn and Eloff can be found in modalities of resiliency and can be utilized in schools and communities as a preventative measure against the life's onslaughts. These cognitive, emotive and behavioural characteristics should therefore also be included in the development of the Resilience Enhancement Kit to foster these qualities of middle adolescents and utilize their strengths in these areas.

Jew, Green and Kroger (1999:10) as well as Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1995:12) found in their studies that the construct of resiliency needed to be studied for its importance in wellbeing and that there are few preventative intervention measures addressing resiliency with a focus on strengths. Even though resiliency is seen as an innate capacity, resilient behaviour adapts with each developmental phase and can vary on a continuum of less optimum resilience to optimum resilience based on the middle adolescent's developed skills. Hunter and Chandler (1999:5) illustrated this view by the following diagram:

Table 1

LIFE EVENTS	SELF	FAMILY	SCHOOL	COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full term birth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Satisfactory birth weight - Injury free birth - Able bodied • Continued good health • Opportunities at major life transitions • Meeting significant persons • Moving into a more supportive community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy temperament - Academic ability - Emotional strength - Sense of autonomy - Sense of humour - Social competence - Physical competence • Coping behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem solving strategies - Active engagement - Optimism - Persistence - Reflectivity • Beliefs about self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High self esteem - Positive self efficacy - Sense of purpose - Positive attitude - Self confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love & attachment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents - Siblings - Extended Family • Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Material - Emotional • Parenting practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistency - Positive expectations • Models of resiliency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents - Siblings - Extended family • Positive links with school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive relationships - Knowledge of children & middle adolescents - Positive behaviour management skills - Positive sense of efficacy - High expectations • Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time - Adults & Agencies • School climate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child-focused - Collaborative - Caring - Safe/Secure - Empowering • Curriculum and special programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant and enriched - Age appropriate - Social (life skills) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive - Protective - Culturally proud • Pro-social Peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive - Common interests - Common experiences - Sharing - Helpful - Talk with & listen • Sports and clubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive self-identity - Belongingness & connectedness - Opportunities for success • Agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive - Protective

The summary illustrates that the development of a middle adolescent’s resilience cannot be separated from the influence exerted by the ecosystem in which he or she functions. Middle adolescents leading competent lives despite disruptive life events exhibit specific characteristics. The resiliency capacities, competencies (that includes attitudes, knowledge and skills), strengths and assets are situated within the middle adolescents’ emotional, social and cognitive modalities. The characteristics identified by the following researchers Benard (1995:1); Henderson (2002:3); Rouse (1998:2); Jew, Green and Kroger (1999:2) as well as Mangham, McGrath, Reid and Stewart (1995:8) form the following essential competencies that constitute resilience:

1.1.1. Emotional domain

Emotional stability is important in resiliency and can be construed in the following way: a middle adolescent’s emotional stability is like a ‘spirit level’, which is in equilibrium. Significant events could disturb the equilibrium and render the middle adolescent without the necessary resiliency competencies, to become ineffectual in contending and adapting to the stressors in his or her life. The

ability to **identify** personal **emotions** and those of others through perceptiveness and by being conscious of the meaning given to emotion provoking situations, forms part of emotional stability. The insight into the rational or irrational emotional reaction to events in life and the necessary competencies with which to control it is an important aspect of resilience. Showing **empathy** towards others, understanding and accepting others within their unique contexts will be an asset in resiliency. **Ego-control** and **ego-resiliency** is necessary to contend with emotional setbacks and reality testing. It also includes internal locus of control that refers to a belief that the middle adolescent can control his or her actions and is not left to the mercy of the environment (contexts) alone. Human beings are dependable on social interaction where resiliency plays an important role.

1.1.2. Social domain

Social competencies are needed for successful social adaptation. These competencies include the **ability to form and maintain positive relationships** with parents, teachers, peers, significant others and the community as a whole. The ability to **communicate on a verbal and non-verbal level** is important in order to understand received messages as well as conveying messages of intent. Having a **sense of humour** is an important skill in relieving the effects of stress and maintaining favourable relationships. **Autonomy** is the ability and desire to accomplish tasks individually. **Working effectively within a group** is also an important social modality. A **sense of self-identity** is vital for the adolescent as it prevents them from succumbing to unfavourable peer pressure. A **sense of identity** will also enable the adolescent to fulfil his or her place in society. **Self-efficacy** enables middle adolescents to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation and actions. Efficacy help determine how much effort middle adolescents will spend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles and adverse situations. **Self-perception** is the way in which a middle adolescent perceives himself of herself and it influences his or her self-motivation, self-worth, self-confidence and self-

esteem. All these above-mentioned competencies empower the middle adolescent to effectively function within society and enable him or her to be a contributing citizen while facing social adversity successfully. Emotional- and social decisions as well as meaning attribution are made cognitively, therefore these resiliency competencies also need to be enhanced.

1.1.3. Cognitive domain

Meta-cognition competencies include the ability to solve problems, to plan and think critically, reflectively and creatively. A resilient middle adolescent has a **positive view** of his or her personal **future**, a **sense of purpose, goals** and **aspirations**. These favourable resiliency modalities create hope and motivate a middle adolescent to work hard for their future and overcome problems and obstacles. The middle adolescent's **thinking style** affects how they perceive and react to problems and difficulties and how they use their **meta-cognition** to address the adversities.

Being able to utilize their internal resilience modalities effectively will empower middle adolescents not only to survive against the odds, but also to elicit strengths and to excel in adverse situations. Middle adolescents spend a significant extent of their time in school and many protective factors and processes can be embedded within schools practices, policies and curriculum to help develop and improve resiliency.

1.2. The role of the school context in promoting resilience.

A school can create a nurturing environment so forceful that for at least six hours a day middle adolescents can have a positive influence that can counteract a negative home environment. The school environment can play an efficacious role in fostering resiliency, act as positive catalysts and role models for middle adolescents to develop and enhance their resiliency modalities. Resiliency must be nurtured and cultivated to assist middle adolescents in functioning effectively in school. *"Persons scoring higher on the resiliency scale are likely to*

demonstrate better academic skills, have a higher internal locus of control orientation, have higher self-perceived competence in scholastics, jobs, athletic performance and friendships and display a wider range of coping skills than their less resilient peers" (Jew et al., 1999:16).

Developmental tasks in middle adolescents relating to school functioning usually include school adjustment (attendance and involvement in extracurricular activities), academic achievement and development of learning skills. Peer acceptance, the building and maintaining of friendships, vocational planning, forming a sense of self identity as well as pro-social and moral conduct (following the rules of the school) will also form part of school functioning. Schools need to be institutions where holistic learning takes place that would include the integration of intellectual, social and emotional aspects.

The level of social and emotional adjustment and competencies are often reflected through scholastic achievement, behaviour and interpersonal relationships. *"Effectively promoting social and emotional competence is the key to helping young people become more resistant to the lure of issues such as drugs, teen pregnancy, violent gangs, truancy and dropping out of school. Adolescents need to acquire the skills, attitudes, values and experiences that will motivate them to resist destructive behaviours, make responsible and thoughtful decisions and seek out positive opportunities for growth and learning" (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, & Haynes, 1997:5).* The focus of education must not only focus on the prevention of problems as described by the previous authors but should also promote a process where middle adolescents have the opportunity to discover their potential, to develop values, express emotion and regulate behaviour in striving for self-actualization.

It is evident from the competencies of resilience imbedded in the emotional-, social- and cognitive modalities that resiliency is necessary for success in life. The school can play an important role in fostering and developing resilience in middle adolescents by adapting the curriculum to promote and develop social, emotional and cognitive resiliency. Due to the knowledge the Educational psychologists has regarding the development of the middle adolescents, how they learn as well as the aspects that constitute and contribute to resilience, they can play a significant role in advising and guiding the significant role players in the school context to effectively develop and enhance resilience modalities in middle adolescents. Mwamwenda (1995:5) is of opinion that Educational Psychology should focus on providing the significant role players in the school with information pertaining to the middle adolescents' social-emotional behaviour in a variety of social contexts and modes of as well as the growth of social relationships and attitudes in the course of their lifespan. Educational psychologists can assist teachers to prepare instruction that will suit the needs and interest of the middle adolescents. Educational Psychology informs on the stages of growth and development and what kind of teaching is likely to be successful to understand the roles played by heredity and environment in the development of a middle adolescent.

The school should provide a supportive psychosocial environment where teachers address the emotional and social needs of the middle adolescent and not just the cognitive development. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:123) agree with the views held by Mwamwenda that physical, cognitive, social, emotional and moral developments are all interdependent and should be taught and processes put in place to enhance middle adolescents' resilient development. A middle adolescent who is upset about something that happened will focus on that particular event and their emotional state will hamper them in paying attention to the lesson being taught or in participating effectively in the learning process. It is important that the teacher must be aware of the learner's

emotional state and address their needs in order to focus the learner's attention for effective learning to take place.

Ian Heath (2001:1) suggests that a middle adolescent's state of emotion is transient and changes with various stimuli during the state of equanimity where there is an absence of projection and introjections. The middle adolescent is in a state of equilibrium until a meaningful situation provokes an emotion that is accompanied by mental and physiological reactions. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (1997:4) calls this purely receptive emotional state "Anoesis" and defines it as "a state of being or mind consisting of pure passive receptivity and sensation without understanding or intellectual organisation of the content presented". Knowledge of the middle adolescent's affective conditions and the level of intensity in stressful and adverse situations could be important in the development of resilience in schools.

"Expert teachers are adept at recognising and addressing the emotional state and socio-emotional competencies of learners and based upon their observation, they take some action that positively impacts learning. But what do these expert teachers 'see' and how do they decide upon a course of action? How do learners who have strayed from learning return to a productive path?" (Kort, Reilly & Picard, 2002:1).

Studies addressing the emotional state and emotional competencies of the South African adolescent are sparse. There is a growing need from Educational psychologists and teachers working with middle adolescents from various cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds who notice the learner's difficulties in adapting to changing situations, and require knowledge regarding ways of developing resiliency competencies in middle adolescents. Personal experience of working within a multi-cultural high school confirmed the identified need to ascertain and enhance the resilient emotional-, social and cognitive competencies of the adolescent as a preventative measure and not just rehabilitation measure.

Cohen (1999:4) concurs with the idea that social and emotional experiences profoundly affect and even determine middle adolescents ability to learn and develop and should not be ignored as crucial aspects that need to be developed to prevent problems in the future. The manner in which the emotions affect the middle adolescents' adaptability for changes in society depends on their level of socio-emotional competencies, which is generally described as emotional intelligence.

"Middle adolescents are born with a certain potential for emotional sensitivity, emotional memory, emotional processing and emotional learning ability. These inborn components form the core of ones emotional intelligence. This intelligence can be either developed or damaged with life experiences, particularly by the emotional lessons taught by parents, teachers and caregivers during childhood and adolescence. Emotional intelligence represents a relative measure of a person's healthy or unhealthy development" (Hein, 2001:5).

Therefore, the way in which the middle adolescents identify and manage their emotions and social relationships is an indication of healthy development. Effective management of social and emotional aspects allows middle adolescents to engage socially and in the learning process with success.

Developing healthy social relationships in middle adolescents is an important function of a school. The middle adolescent's resilience can be promoted through relationship with at least one caring adult and in the context of South Africa, where there are single parent family units due to divorce, work or death, a teacher might be that significant adult. Middle adolescents are open to new learning experiences when they feel that they are in a safe, supportive and engaging environment where they can learn from the experiences and interactions with their peers, teachers and psychologists. Modelling of appropriate behaviour by teachers and Educational psychologists as well as teaching pro-social behaviours is essential for middle adolescents in order to learn behaviour management. The school context provides the opportunity for

middle adolescents to learn from different cultures as well as acquiring the norms, values and beliefs that govern society. Social connectedness to teachers, Educational psychologists and peers build resilience because the middle adolescent can identify and utilize them as assets to help them rebound. *"The literature pays little attention to adolescents' relations with other adults who are important to them except their parents, yet these relations exert a tremendous influence on their maturation. During this phase the teacher assumes the role of escort and companion. He or she no longer takes the lead, but walks by the pupil's side which allows them to achieve independence in the school context"* (Gouws & Kruger, 1994:116). It is therefore important that the role teachers and psychologist play in developing resilience competencies in schools be understood and promoted. Educational Psychology places emphasis on the important role emotional and social competencies has on the learning process. How middle adolescents learn is as important as what they learn because the process and content are integrated and are influenced by the social context. Cognitive learning naturally occurs through social interaction. The way a school addresses the middle adolescent's behaviour could be considered one of the indicators of the school's success in incorporating social competence as a significant aspect of educating a middle adolescent holistically. The role of the school context is to enhance resilience through incorporating emotional, social and cognitive competencies in the teaching.

Joseph (1994:191) refers to the words of Greek philosopher Epictetus who said *"people are disturbed not by things but by their view of things"* as well as Shakespeare (Hamlet, act II, scene 2, line 259) who said *"there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so"*. These quotes reinforce the idea that the way middle adolescents think of what happens to them and the appraisals they make of people and situations primarily determine if they react in a way that reflect resilient thinking. Teachers can enhance cognitive competencies by incorporating thinking skills, problem solving and decision-making skills and a focus on future goals as part of the activities to consolidate content taught. The

school context need to empower learners to become flexible in their thinking in order to apply different thinking strategies in a variety of ways, which will enable them to have a multi-perspective, and balanced approach in dealing with stressful or adverse situations. Constructive thinking empowers middle adolescents to utilize the coping skills necessary to rebound against adversity. "*You can boost your resilience by changing the way you think about adversity. How we analyze the events that befall us has a profound effect on our resilience*" (Reivich & Shatte, 2002:3). The role of the teacher is vital in enhancing resilience in middle adolescents because they spent so much time in the school context and can therefore be influenced by example, content and interaction to learn the necessary emotional-, social- and cognitive competencies for resilient functioning. The research conducted into the resilience of middle adolescents within the school context will be rooted in the literary theoretical framework as it is outlined below.

1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The empirical research of the phenomenon referred to as resilience began in the early 1970's, which emerged from the research of risk and the detection of deficits distinctive to the medical model. According to Curtis and Cicchetti (2003:774), the research of resilience had its foundations in the psychodynamic and behavioural theoretical traditions that largely focused on risk and symptom treatment. Some of the terms often considered synonymous with resilience are coping, persistence, adaptation, and long-term success despite adverse circumstances and strengths. Rutter, in the 1980's, (Jacobsen, 2002:2) pioneered research into resilience through his enquiry into why individuals are able to surmount trying experiences and he also wanted to investigate the protective factors and ameliorating circumstances that assist individuals to withstand disadvantageous situations. Frankenburg (Jacobsen, 2002:3), in his address at the Fifth International Conference in 1987 regarding early identification of children at risk, suggested that research should focus on the factors that assisted middle adolescents to cope with adversity. "*The Benard van*

Leer Foundation conference in 1991, provided a definite turning point in research as ideas regarding the need to focus on building on the strengths in children came to the forefront" (Jacobsen, 2002:3). The shift to view middle adolescents differently and focus more on an empowerment paradigm that focused on strengths, rather than deficits, encompassed a merging of various researchers' viewpoints. Strümpfer (1999:3) indicated that the construct of "*fortigenesis (origin of strengths)*" could be traced back to various other researchers' viewpoints such as:

- ❖ Frankl (1964) who referred to the human capacity for self-transcendence;
- ❖ Kobasa's (1970) construct of a hardy personality;
- ❖ Scheier and Carver (1987) who referred to a dispositional optimism and an expectancy for favourable outcomes;
- ❖ Epstein's (1989) construct of constructive thinking in achieving and maintaining emotional and physical wellbeing;
- ❖ Snyder's (1995) construct of hope to meet goals.

Studies into the advanced construct of resilience unfolded and "*a conceptual framework developed that viewed resilience as a dynamic process that is influenced by neural and psychological self-organization as well as transactions between the ecological context and the developing organism" (Curtis et al., 2003:776).* According to Turner, Norman and Zunz, (1995:25) the concept of resilience model has developed through the years and is founded upon three theories of social and behavioural science namely that of the Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Behavioural Theory and Health Realisation Theory. This research comprises of these above-mentioned theories and includes the Ecological systems theory of Bröfenbrenner and the Asset-based perspective. The impact of the Positive Psychology movement regarding resilience will also be discussed.

1.3.1. Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning theory of Bandura emphasizes that human behaviour is learned by observation, modelling and imitation. Human behaviours also include attitudes and the emotional reactions of others. "*Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences*" (Rutledge, 2000:1). This statement implies that learning occurs within a social context. The social learning theory underlies the concept of resilience because social environments play an important role in the development of values and attitudes while creating the opportunity to practice behaviours and reinforce aspects like social competencies.

Rutledge (2000:5) emphasises that middle adolescents' self-efficacy and self-regulation, key aspects of resiliency, could be enhanced through observing, modelling and imitating significant others especially with regard to middle adolescents and their peers. The school context is an ideal setting where resilience can be enhanced because the middle adolescents are amongst their peers where they can learn from each other as well as having the guidance of a teacher to facilitate the learning process. Middle adolescents learn values, social rules, roles and skills from their peers that will enable them to function within society.

The Social Learning theory can be incorporated in the compilation of the Resilience Enhancement Kit by structuring activities that require learners to work together in groups or pairs as well as observing demonstrated or modelled behaviour from the teacher or psychologist. The importance of social learning and the application thereof in the assessment instrument (Resiliency Scale for learners) can be stated as questions that require the middle adolescent to reflect on how they apply and utilize socially constructed behaviour (see questions 8; 9; 10; 15; 20; 26; 27; 29; 31-40;49; 55; 58; 60; 66; 72). How middle adolescents

think, feel and react in the social context also reflect their level of resilient functioning.

1.3.2. Cognitive Behavioural Theory

Thompson and Rudolph (1996:177) suggest that the Cognitive Behavioural theory is often associated with the Rational-Emotive-Behaviour theory of Ellis and utilized as an integrative therapeutic approach. The Cognitive Behavioural theory focuses on the interplay among cognition, emotions and behaviour. The theory states that how and what middle adolescents think, influences their emotional reactions and behaviour.

The interacting and interdependent nature of emotional-social- and cognitive competencies require that the teacher in the school context should create an environment where the middle adolescents can explore, express and develop these competencies in the process of learning. In education, teachers are concerned with influencing the behaviour of middle adolescents and Educational Psychology enables the teacher to understand the causes of behaviour as well as how emotions can affect behaviour. In support of this view Mwamwenda (1995:6) states that the research of Educational Psychology informs prospective and practicing teachers to have knowledge about how middle adolescents think, respond and feel as well as why they behave as they do, and what initiates and sustains their behaviour. Educational Psychology is intended to provide teachers with knowledge of personality development, which can assist them in guiding middle adolescents to self-actualization and the positive self-concept deemed important to academic achievement and adjustment.

Behaviour is learned and can therefore be changed through behaviour modification and thought-restructuring methods. Grohol (1995:1) state that the Cognitive-behavioural theory focus on a person's irrational or faulty thinking and behaviours but that it can be changed by educating the person to modify their thinking and reinforcing positive experiences that will lead to changes in the way

that person copes. Winnett, Bernstein, Cogswell and Paris (Thompson et al., 1996:178) initiated the development of the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in 1987. The therapy model incorporates aspects that could foster resilience such as *"behavioural procedures that include contingent reinforcement, shaping, prompting and modelling to increase social interaction; pairing successful task completion with positive self-statements and reinforcement for those self-statements; cognitive interventions which are used with social-skills training; role-playing and self-management and self-control procedures such as self-evaluation and self-reinforcement"* (Thompson et al., 1996:178).

These mentioned aspects can be incorporated when compiling the Resilience Enhancement Kit to include activities geared towards addressing the middle adolescents thinking style by utilizing meta-cognitive strategies and self-evaluation questionnaires, teaching them positive self-talk statements (reinforced through tokens in the board game) as well as how to apply ego-resiliency strategies (through role-playing, modelling and games). The assessment instrument (Resiliency Scale for learners) focus on the emotional-, social- and cognitive competencies and because it is a questionnaire that rely on the middle adolescents' perception on their functioning in these areas, the teacher and psychologist can ascertain how they evaluate their own thoughts, feelings and behaviour to assist them in areas in need of further development. The middle adolescent must also be guided towards being realistic about their resilient functioning in order for them to develop self-regulating strategies that will aid them in rebounding.

1.3.3. Health Realisation Theory

Wartel (2003:185) indicates that the Health Realisation theory had been used for the past 27 years but was only recently been described by Roger Mills and George Pransky. The Health Realisation theory is founded on Cognitive and Constructivist theories.

The theory suggests that just as human bodies have a survival and healing capacity, minds also have an innate self-regulating (self-help) mechanism through common sense. Thought is seen as the foundation for feeling and behaviour and that middle adolescents construct their own view of reality through two modes of thinking. Mills and Shuford (2003:12) indicate that positive or negative thoughts become blended with consciousness to form a perception of reality at each moment. Wartel (2003:185) quotes Mills' (1995) explanation of the theory as follows "*the Health Realisation theory uses three principles: mind, thought and consciousness. The metaphor of a film projector is used to explain the process. Mind, the irreducible source of mental energy is the projector. Thought is the film through which the light – carrying sensory stimuli- shines. Consciousness is the light, causing the images on the screen to appear real.*"

The underlying principals of the Health Realisation theory according to Mills and Shuford (2003:10) are the following:

- ❖ Middle adolescent's perceptions and viewpoints are formed by way of thought combined with consciousness and projected outward by the mind;
- ❖ middle adolescents have an inborn capacity for good judgement, common sense, learning and insight;
- ❖ middle adolescents can be guided to recognise the perceptual-emotional state that stemmed from conditioned thinking in contrast to the types of feelings and insights that accompanies healthy states of mind;
- ❖ middle adolescents can be guided to recognize patterns of negative feelings that point back to thinking and that a middle adolescent can decide to act or not on those feelings.

The assumption is made that thinking can be either analytical or intuitive. Analytical thinking is useful in problem solving where assessment is coupled with selective information stored in memory to yield solutions and is learned through conditioning. Intuitive thinking is based on intuition, common sense, creativity and wisdom and is used to reflect and to ascertain what is right for the middle

adolescent. Feelings are seen as a "*barometer*" (Wartel, 2003:186) to help middle adolescents differentiate between the two thought processes and use the one most appropriate. Resiliency encompasses healthy thinking and self-regulation inherent to this theory. "*The Health Realisation theory fits in well with the trend towards strengths-based practice, focusing on the client's resources and resilience, on self-empowerment and self-help, effectiveness and efficiency*" (Wartel, 2003:185). The Health Realisation theory emphasises innate resiliency that empower middle adolescents to maintain wellbeing, self-motivation, level-headed thinking and common sense.

This theory can be incorporated in the compiling of the Resilience Enhancement Kit through activities where middle adolescents can share their life stories, apply meta-cognition in solving a mystery and analyzing a situation based on a real life scenario. These activities will allow middle adolescents to use their thinking skills and utilize strengths such as wisdom, creativity and intuition to practice applying their skills in scenario's that imitate real life which will enable them to draw upon experience when they have to help (rebound) themselves in similar situations. The assessment instrument (Resiliency Scale for learners) can incorporate this theory because it measures the middle adolescent's ability to draw upon his or her own strengths, thinking style and meta-cognition to be able to rebound (see questions 8; 9; 10; 11; 15; 16; 19; 22; 23; 24; 27; 28; 29; 30; 33; 38; 39; 41; 43; 45; 47; 49; 52; 54; 56-65; 69; 73, 75). The middle adolescent has inherent strengths but they can also use their environmental support systems to help them rebound.

1.3.4. Ecological Systems Theory

Waller (2001:2) is of the opinion that resilience is an ever-changing product of interacting relationship within a given ecosystemic context. The Ecosystemic perspective is a coalescing of the ecological and systems theories. The ecosystemic perspective emphasises the interrelatedness and interdependency between the middle adolescent and the various social systems. The micro

system includes the middle adolescent's immediate surroundings namely the home, classroom, peer groups and school. The macro system includes communities, cultures and broader civilization. Each social system has its own dynamics, rules, discourses and relationships. This view is supported by Bartelt (1994:101) who is of opinion that resiliency has its place within a dynamic model of the self, the family and the community, each part of a vibrant environment influencing the educational process. Furthermore, Waller (2001:6) quotes Brönfenbrenner (1979) as saying that "*resilience is not static. There is a bidirectionality in the relationship between a person and the environment where middle adolescents influence life situations as well as being influenced by them. At different points in time the same middle adolescent may respond very differently and be resilient in response to one adverse life event, yet vulnerable to another*". This implies that various resiliency factors that are situated within the middle adolescent (emotional, social, cognitive, biological and normative) and within the family and community that are linked in a dynamic, interdependent and interacting relationship according to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:34).

The adolescent is viewed holistically within the ecosystemic perspective and the middle adolescent's resiliency can vary within different situations for example the middle adolescent can be resilient when identifying his or her own emotions but not as capable of identifying emotions in others. Resiliency can be promoted within the context of middle adolescent's supports and with the aid of the various systems. The schools (micro system) can play an important part in fostering resilience in middle adolescents. In compiling the Resilience Enhancement Kit this theory will be utilized to develop the middle adolescents' resilience modalities in the school context as well as amongst their peer group. The middle adolescents will be encouraged to utilize the broader community as assets, for example activities geared towards finding a prominent role model in society or resources that can be harnessed to develop and foster resilience. The Resiliency Scale for learners will have to take into consideration the internal and external

contexts that can aid in fostering resilience, for example personal characteristics, parents, peers and the school context.

1.3.5. Asset-based perspective

Scales and Leffert (1999:5) mention that since 1989, Asset-based research has been conducted and is grounded in the literature on resilience, prevention and adolescent development that has illuminated the positive relationships, opportunities, competencies, values and self-perceptions that middle adolescents need to succeed. The Asset-based approach emphasises the inherent strengths, system supports and opportunities middle adolescents have to assist them in dealing with life's adversities and stressors. *"The Asset-based perspective can promote resilience among young people because it weaves a strong fabric that supports and guides positive youth development even in the face of multiple adversities"* (Scales et al., 1999:10). The Asset-based perspective is a capacity-focused paradigm that perceives the middle adolescent and community to be *"active change agents rather than passive beneficiaries"* according to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:7). This implies that middle adolescents and communities can utilise their own internal and external assets to mobilise it in enhancing their level of resilience. According to Scales and Leffert (1999:6), there are eight categories of developmental assets to enhance resilience:

External assets:

➤ Support

The support assets refer to the ways in which middle adolescents are loved, affirmed and accepted. Middle adolescents must ideally experience and abundance of support from the people in the various social settings.

➤ Empowerment

The empowerment assets focus on community willingness to let middle adolescents contribute to society and specifically the home - and school setting in meaningful ways and creating a sense of being valued by significant others.

➤ Boundaries and expectations

Clear and consistent boundaries are a set of messages about appropriate behaviour and expectations across social contexts.

- Constructive use of time and resources

Communities must provide an array of constructive opportunities that lead to growth and contribute to development in middle adolescents during and after school.

Internal assets:

- Commitment to learning

Developing an internal intellectual curiosity and the skills to gain new knowledge is essential for success. These assets motivate middle adolescents to achieve and express their curiosity and work ethic in homework and schoolwork.

- Positive values and norms

Positive values and norms are the internal compasses that guide middle adolescents' priorities, behaviour and choices in their lives.

- Social skills

These assets are important personal and interpersonal skills middle adolescents need to negotiate the maze of choices, options and relationships they face. These skills lay the foundation for independence and competence.

- Positive identity

These assets focus on the middle adolescents' views of themselves, their sense of self, purpose and worth.

Assets play a critical role in motivation and behaviours that support long-term wellbeing. The asset-based perspective can be included in the compilation of the Resilience Enhancement Kit through activities where the middle adolescent can interview their peers to gain insight into how they can be a support against the onslaughts of life, identifying the characteristics of a role model they admire and even what resources are available at school and in the community that they can utilize for help. The assessment instrument (Resiliency Scale) can also be focused on identifying if the middle adolescent is able to identify and utilize the

assets (internally and externally) in the various contexts to assist them (see questions 20; 27; 29; 31-40; 55; 60; 66) when in stressful and adverse situations.

1.3.6. Positive Psychology

The Positive Psychology movement is headed by Martin Seligman, who with the support of the Templeton Foundation, aims to lead a scientific inquiry into the research of positive human experiences, human strengths or traits. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi wanted to study human strength, resilience, and optimal human functioning. As mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework for resilience, the interest in mental health rather than mental illness has its foundations in the work of earlier researchers who had also practiced Positive Psychology for example Bandura, Allport and Maslow who Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi drew on in the development of their theories.

Csikszentmihalyi's theory of "flow" describes how a person can spend time and effort on an activity that has few rewards outside itself to produce a mental state where a person can forget about themselves by focusing on the activity. The "flow" is a metaphor for how it feels when the experience of actively participating and focusing of skills to achieve a goal and gaining positive feedback creates a sense of purpose, which can lead to happiness. Csikszentmihalyi's theory incorporates resilience in that a middle adolescent can be actively involved with improving their mental state by utilizing their skills, setting goals and gaining positive feedback as a means to bounce back from stressors and problems in their lives. Seligman agreed with the idea that people need to draw on their strengths to overcome their problems but also to thrive and pursue happiness.

Three important aims of Positive Psychology as outlined by Seligman are to understand what makes life meaningful, to prevent pathology and to help people to not just endure and survive but to thrive. *"The aim of Positive Psychology is to understand and then build those factors that allow individuals, communities and*

societies to flourish. It needs emphasizing that this endeavour is descriptive, not prescriptive. It requires for the most part a refocusing of scientific energy, the same methods can be used to measure, understand and build those characteristics that make life most worth living" (Klaassen, 2000:6). Seligman (2002:3) proposed that the time had come to alter the focus on the research, classification and treatment of pathology that was the focus after World War 2, and to focus on enhancing the positive aspects that make people resilient. He also suggested that the attention to pathology in psychology neglected the idea of a fulfilled individual and a thriving community, and neglected the possibility that building strength is the most potent weapon in the arsenal of therapy.

The focus of positive psychology is to change from a fixation only with repairing problems and stressors in life but to build the best virtues in life. Psychology therefore should focus on the prevention of problems and not only the rehabilitation and rectification thereof. The building of competencies rather than just a focus on correcting inharmonious relationships and addressing problems will create buffers against psychopathology and will strengthen preventative measures. *"It is much easier to define the desired or adaptive direction of change if the goal of such change is to restore an earlier state or a 'normal' state. It is a much more difficult issue to define a human strength if one considers psychological changes other than return to prior levels of functioning"* (Aspinwall, & Staudinger, 2002:2). This implies that psychology should focus on enhancing and developing strengths within middle adolescents which will help them rebound and not just focus on merely coping with a difficult situation.

Positive Psychology centres on the individual and community's experiences of competencies and utilizing the inherent strengths to be able to rebound against adversities and to prosper. *"The field of Positive Psychology at the subjective level is about positive subjective experience: wellbeing and satisfaction, and flow, joy, the sensual pleasures and happiness and constructive cognitions about the future-optimism, hope and faith. At the individual level it is about positive*

individual traits- the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, talent and wisdom. At the group level it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance and work ethic" (Seligman, 2002:3). These mentioned virtues are proposed by Seligman as areas that therapy can focus on to guide middle adolescents to self-actualization and resilient functioning.

However, it is important that the focus of Positive Psychology should not deny the existence of problems but rather harness the strengths and virtues middle adolescents might have to empower them to deal with life. Held (2003:2) refers to Aspinwall; Staudinger, Ryff and Singer who feel "*a psychology of human strengths should not be the research of how negative experience may be avoided or ignored, but rather how positive and negative experience may be interrelated. We underscore the need to move beyond false dichotomies that separate positive and negative features of the human condition, human wellbeing is fundamentally about the joining of these realms.*" Keeping this view in mind the Resiliency Scale for learners enables the middle adolescent to see where their strengths are in their emotional-, social- and cognitive modalities as well identifying the areas that need developing and enhancing to optimize resilient functioning. Furthermore, the Positive Psychology theory could be incorporated in the compilation of the Resilience Enhancement Kit by making the middle adolescents aware through the activities presented (for example identifying and describing their sense of self) that they have strengths that can be assets to others and themselves. The middle adolescent can focus on a future expectation guided by a belief in themselves and goals that direct their behaviour.

No research on resilience would be complete without looking critically at the limitations and problems the theory poses in literature. Lewis (2000:3) indicates that resilience has been a characteristically American concept that cannot be

divorced from the cultural context of that society. Therefore, it is crucial for research to be undertaken in various countries that critically look at the similarities and differences in the aspects that compose resiliency. In this research resiliency will be explored within the South-African context and its inherent values and norms. Lewis (2000:3) further suggests that "*the assumption is often made that it is always possible to overcome adversity by your own efforts, and that those who are overwhelmed by their circumstances are in some way culpable, lacking moral fibre.*" This view that an middle adolescent is either resilient or not at all is an incorrect assumption, as discussed earlier and quoted from Hunter and Chandler (1999:5), resilience lies on a continuum and a middle adolescent might be less resilient in one area (modality) of his or her life but more resilient in a different area (modality). Furthermore, it is important to view the middle adolescent holistically, functioning within the various contexts in a dynamic, interactive and interdependent relationship that implies that a middle adolescent can enhance his or her resilience with the involvement of these contexts. The way in which these contexts can assist the middle adolescent to become more resilient must therefore be researched, and in this research the school's role in enhancing resilience will be explored.

Bartelt (1994:101) has some methodological apprehensions about how the concept of resilience is defined and measured. "*Are the indicators (of resilience) measuring which they purport to measure, can the concept be empirically specified and offer consistent relationships with other variables that it is supposed to be related, or unrelated to? Successful adaptation is seen as evidence of resilience, and unsuccessful adaptation as an absence of resilience. Resilience itself, however is never directly observed, it is always imputed. As an empirical concept, then, there is difficulty in identifying an unambiguous referent to this force/ factor of resilience*" (Bartelt, 1994:101). In the light of the question posed by Bartelt, Lewis (2000:4) is of opinion that researchers should identify aspects of a middle adolescents' experience that lead them to act in ways that are more resilient and encourage middle adolescents to learn from their

experiences. In this research the method of appraisal of resilience will be based on aspects identified through literature as well as the aspects learners describe that make them resilient based on their life experiences. Newman and Blackburn (2002:10) are of opinion that the literature on resilience promotion, while empirically based, includes few accounts of specific strategies used to promote resilience. They feel that the current theories merely describe the relationship between variables but that it is an inadequate basis for psychological practice. This implies that there is a need to identify ways of enhancing and developing resilience and in this research this need will be addressed.

Another aspect that has to be kept in mind is that ethical or value systems that people base concept of strength or assets on can differ from culture to culture. It is necessary to realize that there may be situations and contexts where attributes or processes that work as strengths in one cultural context may be liabilities in another. Aspinwall and Staudinger (2002:3) reiterates this view and are of opinion that normative issues need to be clarified because objective and subjective criteria often result in different ideas about what is functional or adaptive in a person and therefore what constitutes a human strength. This research will take into account the cultural differences found in the South African population because the research will be conducted in a multicultural context and the middle adolescents will have the opportunity to share their life experiences within their cultural frameworks. The focus on strengths and using personal assets in overcoming adversities as well as learning to rebound from the example set during social interaction necessitates that resilience should be understood from various theories and perspectives and not just from a single frame of reference.

It can be concluded that resilience is an aspect to be fostered throughout a middle adolescent's development by strengthening protective processes. When resilience is viewed as a developmental process, residing internally and externally within middle adolescents, then fostering strategies for change can be

directed toward practices, curriculum, and attitudes among the helping profession and educators.

1.4. AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This research forms part of a wider comparative research between South African and Dutch middle adolescents regarding the relationship between resilience as demonstrated in school-related functioning and the school context. Aspects which will be part of the scope of the wider comparative research but not of this research include a pilot research to formulate an asset focus list in the school context based on resilience characteristics regarding middle adolescents from different races, languages and socio-economic groups compared to those of the Dutch middle adolescents as well as the in-depth analysis of the school context.

The changing role of the Educational Psychologists in the twenty first century requires that the knowledge and expertise regarding the middle adolescents' development, teaching and learning, be shared with the relevant stakeholders in education to empower them in assisting the learners to reach their full potential.

"As psychologists, we have the knowledge of the principles of human development, and we are specialists in social and human relations and their vicissitudes. Such specialist knowledge as we possess fits us to contribute to the design of schooling systems, curricula and educational policy. In accordance with the APA (division of Educational Psychology), psychology is concerned with the development, evaluation and application of theories and principles of human learning, teaching and instruction and theory-derived educational material, programs, strategies and techniques that can enhance life-long educational activities and processes" (Sharrat, 1995:212-213).

Therefore as specialists, it is the task of the Educational Psychologist to develop material and empower significant stakeholders in the schools to assist the middle adolescent with enhancing and developing their resilience modalities. The aim of this ethnographic research is to describe and explore the process of how to appraise, develop and enhance the modalities of

resilience of the South African middle adolescent in the school context (within a private school in South Africa). The research of resilience modalities will contribute to the development of the Resilience Enhancement Kit as an intervention instrument and Resiliency Scale that can be used within the school context (for example in the subject Life Orientation) by teachers and psychologists to appraise, foster and enhance resiliency in middle adolescents. It is envisaged that the outcome of the research could add to the knowledge base concerning resilience and might inform on curriculum development. Sharrat (1995:216) emphasises that the role of the Educational psychologists is to "*bridge the gap between theory and practical application. The teachers need assistance in the school system in areas where theory and methods of application need to be developed to suit the needs of the learners within the South African context.*"

1.5. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The exploratory question of this research can be adjudged as follows:

- ✘ How might the modalities of resilience of the middle adolescents be appraised and enhanced?

The following sub-ordinate questions will be examined to illuminate the critical aspects of this research:

- ✘ What is the nature of the emotional- social and cognitive resiliency modalities of the middle adolescent?
- ✘ What contents and methods could be developed to appraise and enhance the resilience modalities of the middle adolescent?

1.6. LITERATURE REVIEW

The necessity for a preliminary literature review as well as a critical analysis of literature is due to the fact that there is little research done regarding the level of resilience of middle adolescents in South Africa. Furthermore, the preliminary literature review indicated that the current research on resiliency focuses only on

single aspects found in the resiliency modalities of middle adolescents. An in-depth literature review is necessary to amalgamate the aspects that constitute resiliency in order to gain a holistic framework of a middle adolescent's resilience modalities and serve as a contribution to the knowledge base regarding the assessment and development of resilience. It is important that the constituents for the appraisal and enhancement of the modalities of resilience in this research have its foundation in relevant literature. The determinants of resiliency must also be elucidated by means of the literature review because it serves as the guideline to ascertain participants' functioning on the continuum of resiliency by means of a Likert-type scale. There will be an in-depth review of relevant literature regarding the nature, theories, development and appraisal of emotional-social- and cognitive competencies necessary for the modalities of resilience. Information gathered for the literature review will be extracted from recent books; articles in journals, periodicals and scientific electronic information gathered from the internet.

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.7.1. Paradigmatic perspective

Research is canvassed on the framework of how the researcher interprets his or her reality within a 21st century society and incorporates the anthropological-ontological approach obtained from educational tutelage. The anthropological views held by Educational psychologists and described by Van Niekerk (1991: 19-26) can be outlined as follows:

- ❖ The middle adolescent is seen as being part of a social network (Ecosystemic perspective) with norms and values in the world but also an active participant in his or her learning and development.
- ❖ The middle adolescent is seen holistically and viewed as unique with his or her own abilities, needs and assets.
- ❖ The middle adolescent has the potential for continuous development but requires the guidance of teaching and instruction to reach his or her full potential.

- ❖ All middle adolescents have the inherent drive to be someone and form their own identity.
- ❖ The middle adolescent has a historicity of relationships that interact and he or she is influenced by the times he or she lives in.

The ontological stance according to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:11) refers to the nature of the world and what can be known about it. Educational Psychology studies the middle adolescents' sense of reality through the socially constructed meaning they give to their life world. *"Ontological view studies the nature of reality. There is a view that there are multiple socially constructed realities and inquiry seeks to identify limited patterns that may be culturally specific"* (Eric Clearinghouse, 2004:1). The paradigmatic perspective of the research on resilience will therefore encompass the middle adolescents' interactions and meanings of their life world within the school context.

The nature of the problem statement guides the research methodology and this research will be conducted from a combined quantitative- and qualitative approach. These two approaches are seen as complementary to each other within a model described by Creswell (1994:173) as a dominant-less-dominant model. *"In this design the researcher presents the research with a single, dominant paradigm with one small component of the overall research drawn from the alternative paradigm"* (Creswell, 1994:174). This implies that the research will mainly be grounded in the qualitative approach but quantitative information will be collected from the statistical analysis of the sample group. Qualitative research is the method of inquiry that seeks to understand social and cultural phenomena within the context of the participant's perspectives and experiences. *"Qualitative inquiry, is an interactive research field, and is derived from subfields of the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and psychology. Qualitative research is naturalistic inquiry that discovers the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them. The research describes and analyzes people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions"* (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:391). In this research the middle adolescents'

perceptions regarding their own resilience will be ascertained as well as their views on what positive influences and aspects made them bounce back against adversities. The middle adolescents are also required to draw upon their personal and shared experiences in developing those modalities of resilience that needs to be enhanced. Qualitative research is more flexible, responsive and open to contextual interpretation and therefore it will be more suited for ascertaining the adolescent's emotional-, social and cognitive modalities of resiliency. The qualitative approach uses an inductive form of reasoning, which implies that a phenomenon is observed, data is collected, themes analysed and conclusions are drawn.

The epistemological stance in this research regarding the middle adolescents' level and development of resilience will be conducted from an interpretive approach. *"Interpretative research starts out with the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings" (Myers, 1997:6)*. The quantitative method will be used when the middle adolescent's resiliency will be ascertained through a self-disclosure questionnaire regarding their perceived levels of resilient functioning. An open-ended question will be analyzed for the determinants that the middle adolescents feel contributed to their level of resilience. The preliminary literature research and personal experience working with middle adolescents emphasised the need to develop and foster emotional-social and cognitive resiliency competencies to handle adversities and stressors effectively in a fast passed and ever-changing world. The empirical design and literature review are selected as it complements the inductive approach used in this research.

1.7.2. Empirical investigation

The wider research between South Africa and the Netherlands will be executed within the design of a comparative cross-cultural and cross-national research. A

detailed discussion of the research methodology of this research will be presented in chapter six; a compendious demarcation of this research is presented in this chapter and is outlined as follows:

1.7.2.1. Case studies

The exploration of this research problem will be conducted by means of comparative data analysis and an in-depth interpretation of case studies. "*A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context*" (Myers, 1997:5). The case study analysis focuses on the phenomenon of resilience in middle adolescents. Case studies are chosen due to the flexible nature thereof for the varying contexts and meaning attribution of the multi-cultural group of middle adolescents. The analysis of the data from the case studies will provide insight into the participant's perceptions of their social realities with regard to their level of resilience and factors that influenced their resilience. The participants will be asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding their resilience modalities and open-ended question will be posed. The case study design is also used in the development and evaluation of a structured design (Resilience Enhancement Kit) to enhance resilience in middle adolescents.

1.7.2.2. Sampling and Population

The sampling will be based on a maximum variation sampling process. "*A heterogeneous sample is purposefully selected to search for unique cases and commonalities in experiences*" (Schurnink, 1998: 255). The target population for this research will be made up of 14-year-old middle adolescents in an inner-city school located in Johannesburg. The total number (30 learners) in grade 8 will be assessed for their levels of resilience. The school is chosen for its diverse multi-cultural composition even before 1994. The school has been in existence for 40 years and despite adversities experienced by the learners, it boasts a full matric pass-rate.

1.7.2.3. Likert-scale questionnaire (Resiliency Scale) and open ended question

"The Likert Scale was developed by Rensis Likert in the 1920's in an attempt to improve the levels of measurement in social research through the use of standardized response categories in survey questionnaires. It is one of the most frequently used attitude measure in social sciences. Participants are requested to state their level of agreement with a series of attitude statements. Each degree of agreement or disagreement is given a value on a predetermined scale. Often a set of Likert items will be summed to provide a total score for the attitude" (Hitchcock & Porter, 2003:1).

Likert scale is an ordinal scale that captures the middle adolescents' perceptions toward a set of mental or behavioural beliefs about a given object. As mentioned earlier instruments to ascertain the level of resilience in middle adolescents for the South African population is sparse. A Likert-type scale will be developed based on the literature on resiliency determinants found within the emotional-, social and cognitive modalities of middle adolescents. The aim of this Resiliency Scale is to ascertain the level of resilience in each of these various modalities and identify learner's views regarding their level of resilience.

There will be open-ended **question** posed to all the middle adolescents to supplement the Resiliency Scale regarding what the middle adolescent feel contributed to their level of resilience. The open-ended question is stated as follows: *"Hello. Do you remember filling in a questionnaire on (date)? I need you to tell me more about how you cope in life. Can you tell me how you do it?"* Five register / class teachers will also be asked to identify five resilient and five less resilient learners (from the target grade 8 group) in their classrooms and complete the Resiliency Scale for teachers (Likert-type questionnaire) on each of the identified middle adolescents. The findings of the teachers will be compared to that of the middle adolescents' views on their levels of resiliency. The Resilience Enhancement Kit will be administered to the middle adolescents to

develop and enhance their resilience and then the Resiliency Scale for learners will be reintroduced to appraise their level of improvement. An exposition of the adolescent responses in the Resiliency Scale and the nature and results of the Resilience Enhancement Kit will be discussed and included in chapter six.

1.7.2.4. Resilience Enhancement Kit

The determinants found in the Resilience Enhancement Kit are based on the literature regarding resilience found within the emotional-, social and cognitive modalities. The Resilience Enhancement Kit includes activities such as group work, role-play and a board game, that can be administered by Educational psychologists and teachers in an enjoyable and non-threatening way to enhance and develop the resilience modalities in middle adolescents.

"Most child psychologists consider board games to be an essential resource to help build connections and relationships with young adolescents as well as working on their problems. Games bring a sense of safety and permissiveness, opening doors for expression while mimicking real life and thus providing a metaphor for projection of unconscious material. Overcoming challenges and adversities is a critical aspect of resilience that requires the experience of failure and of making mistakes and learning from them in an enjoyable controlled environment when playing a game" (Reid, 2001:13).

Therefore, the Resilience Enhancement Kit will also include a board game in order to allow the middle adolescents to express themselves and learn in a non-threatening manner. As discussed earlier, the preliminary literature review indicated that there has been little research done regarding enhancing or ascertaining the level of resiliency that amalgamates the relevant determinants into a single framework. There has merely been a focus on single aspects of resiliency in past research. Currently there seem to be only one board game called "*Bouncing back*" that is available in America, which aims to introduce some determinants of resilience to children in an enjoyable manner. MacFarlane

(2000) from the University of the North West also looked at the personality factors contributing to resilience and provided a group intervention programme to promote wellness in adolescents at risk. The need to develop resilience modalities in middle adolescents that can be incorporated in the Outcomes Based Education school system is paramount in assisting middle adolescents to bounce back against adversities and stressors of a changing society.

The Resilience Enhancement Kit will be divided into the three sections of resilience modalities namely the emotional-, social and cognitive modalities. The Resilience Enhancement Kit will be administered in the format of sessions where the middle adolescents will be given the opportunity to learn and practice competencies that will enhance their level of resilience. At the onset of administering the Resilience Enhancement Kit a session will be allocated to completing the Resiliency Scale for learners that will give an indication of the middle adolescents' level of resilience. There will be a session to convey the rules of the game as well as what is required of the middle adolescents. At the end of each session, there will be a self-reflection questionnaire to ascertain what was gained during the session. There will also be a final session for re-evaluation of the middle adolescents' gained level of resilience by re-administering the Resiliency Scale for learners as well as an opportunity to apply the competencies they have learnt in the form of a board game. The total sessions adds up to ten sessions for the implementation of the Resilience Enhancement Kit and two sessions for the assessment phases. Each session will be planned with a specific aim to enhance and develop an area of resilience.

The Resilience Enhancement Kit is suitable for a heterogeneous group of between four to six middle adolescents in a group that makes it ideal for the South-African context with large numbers of learners in schools. It also falls within the Outcomes-Based Education philosophy where group work plays an important part as well as the idea of working towards an outcome that will empower the middle adolescents with skills for life. *"The characteristics and*

focus of Outcomes-Based Education are on being learner-centred, being able to use and apply learned knowledge, skills and attitudes for future success. Co-operative learning stimulates peer interaction and learner-to-learner co-operation in the process of fostering successful learning by all. It fosters feelings of positive interdependence and middle adolescent accountability to gain an appreciation for the different middle adolescents and cultures found in South Africa. (Van Der Horst & McDonald, 1997:13 &128).

The Resilience Enhancement Kit is based on these principals as outlined by Van Der Horst and McDonald to ensure that the learners can optimally participate and engage with the presented knowledge, skills and values. The professional (psychologist and teacher) working with the middle adolescents will be actively involved with the Resilience Enhancement Kit by participating, observing and guiding them in the process. Depending on the size of the groups in other schools, another professional (teacher or psychologist) familiar with the aim and function of the Resilience Enhancement Kit, could be asked to assist in facilitating the process. In this research, the Resilience Enhancement Kit will be administered during the allocated Life Orientation periods in the week that is approximately an hour long. An in-depth analysis of the Resilience Enhancement Kit will be discussed in chapter five.

1.7.3. Triangulation

"Triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection in the research of some aspect of human behaviour. Tri-angular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and making use of both quantitative and qualitative data. Triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:112). Inter-rater reliability will be achieved by means of triangulation in the case studies, through open-ended question, the Likert-type pre-test and post-test (Resiliency Scale) after the Resilience

Enhancement Kit has been administered. The pre- and post tests therefore are administered after a period has lapsed.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:115) are of opinion that there are four triangulation categories are frequently used in education. These are time-, space, investigator- and methodological triangulation. Time triangulation refers to the reliability or similarity of data gathered over time and in this research the answers gained from the middle adolescent in their pre- and post-test phase as well as open-ended question will be examined. The space triangulation relates to using participants from different cultures in the research because the differences and similarities in cultures influence generalizing findings. The participants who are participating in this research are multi-cultural. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:114) also refer to investigator triangulation as the using of more than one observer or participant in the research. As the research will be conducted in a school setting the teacher of the grade eight class will also be present during the administration of the Resilience Enhancement Kit and the interpretation of the information will be reviewed and scrutinised by a registered psychologist familiar with the research aspects. The methodological triangulation refers to the using the same method on different occasions and on the same subjects and in this research the same Likert-type questionnaire (Resiliency Scale) will be used to measure resilience with the same middle adolescents after administration of the Resilience Enhancement Kit.

1.8. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Due to the abstract nature of the aspects that is prevalent in the research, it is necessary to clarify the intricacies of what is meant by fundamental terms of the research.

1.8.1. Resilience

Resilience encompasses the middle adolescents' ability and disposition to effectively identify, utilize and manage emotional-, social-, cognitive modalities as

well as constructively and appropriately respond and flexibly adapt to life events marked by adversities, risks and challenges on a personal and environmental level. *"Resilience is the ability of an individual to successfully recover from, or adapt to, adversity and to develop social/emotional and academic competence despite exposure to life's problems"* (Joondalup District Education Office, 2000:1).

1.8.2. Resilient middle adolescent

Resilience is a complex construct that is defined in different ways by researchers in terms of it being a dynamic developmental process, disposition or capacity and a sustained positive outcome. In this research and the wider comparative research, the resilient middle adolescent will be operationally defined as follows: The resilient middle adolescent has a disposition, when faced with perceived diverse situations, to identify and utilize apposite personal modalities (capacities, competencies and strengths) and assets within their contexts to rebound in an optimal manner. The interaction between the middle adolescents and their contexts elicits sustained constructive outcomes that include continuous learning (growing and renewing), fulfilment of needs and flexibly negotiating the situation.

The middle adolescents' school related behaviour is therefore seen as a manifestation of the quality and actualization of their resilient modalities within the school context. *"In understanding resilience the following must be considered: the developmental history which focuses on the competence or psychological functioning of the individual over time; the nature of the adversities faced by the individual; the individual and social assets and risks; the individual characteristics that function as vulnerability or protective factors; environmental liabilities or protective factors and the context for adaptation"* (Masten, 1994:5). In this research, the modalities of resiliency will be investigated as it is found in the emotional-, social- and cognitive domains of middle adolescents.

The modalities of resilience will be outlined hereafter. "*Social-, emotional- and cognitive competence is the ability to understand, manage and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development*" (Weare, 2000:24). The competencies that forms part of resilience modalities will be highlighted in this research.

1.8.3. Competencies

Competency is a holistic concept regarding a combination of attributes that encompasses attitudes, knowledge, understanding, values and skills that middle adolescents need and apply in everyday life. Miller, Brehm and Whitehouse (1998:366) refer to Masten and Coatsworth who feel that competence refers to patterns of effective adaptation while resilience is the manifestation of competence in the face of hardship. In this research competencies will be outlined in terms of emotional-, social- and cognitive competencies the middle adolescent utilizes to foster and enhance resilience modalities. "*The positive youth development construct of competence covers five areas of youth functioning, including social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and moral competencies. Programs are defined as promoting competence if they focus on building specific skills in these areas*" (Catalano; Berglund; Ryan; Lonczak & Hawkins, 2002:18). It is essential that the emotional, social- and cognitive competencies must be distinguished to obtain a clearer understanding of what will be discussed and explored in the forthcoming chapters.

1.8.4. Emotional competencies

Emotional competencies can be seen as the ability to accurately perceive, appraise, express and regulate emotion in a verbal and non-verbal manner to foster emotional growth and wellbeing. Weare (2000:68) reiterates the need for emotional competence and insight into personal emotional states to be well-

integrated people who can build fulfilling relationships. The heightened emotionality is characteristic of the middle adolescents in their emerging development of self-identity and maturity. Middle adolescents become increasingly more sensitive and aware of their own and others emotions and how they display them during their interaction with their peers and significant others in this developmental stage.

Emotional competence within middle adolescents can be promoted by developing skills for identifying feelings in self or others, skills for managing emotional reactions or impulses, building self-management strategies, empathy, and frustration tolerance. *"Psychological resilience in conjunction with emotional competence yields greater gains or growth following the recovery from adversity or trauma. The emotion-eliciting encounter derives its meaningfulness from the social context in which we have grown up, and thus emotional experience is developmentally embedded in social experience; indeed, the two are reciprocally influential"* (Saarni, 1999:3). Emotional competencies are contextually anchored in social meaning and therefore it is important to obtain an understanding of social competency.

1.8.5. Social competencies

Social competence is necessary for social adaptation. Social competency implies being socially perceptive and applying a variety of social behaviours in every day life. Intra-personal social competencies include the development of a self-identity, self-efficacy, self-perception and autonomy. Inter-personal social competencies include communication, the forming and maintenance of relationships, being assertive, being able to resolve conflict, and possessing negotiation skills as well as a sense of humour. *"Social competence is the range of interpersonal skills that help youth integrate feelings, thinking, and actions in order to achieve specific social and interpersonal goals. These skills include encoding relevant social cues; accurately interpreting those social cues; generating effective solutions to interpersonal problems; realistically anticipating consequences and*

potential obstacles to one's actions; and translating social decisions into effective behaviour" (Catalano et al., 2002:16). Middle adolescents must develop age appropriate inter- and intra-personal skills. The different domains of becoming a mature adult are interconnected and the middle adolescent's cognitive competency is closely interwoven with the emotional- and social competencies in the tapestry of resilience.

1.8.6. Cognitive competencies

According to the theory of Piaget (Donald et al., 1997:46) middle adolescents are within the formal-operational phase of their cognitive development that requires them to adapt to their environment by self-regulatory processes of assimilation and accommodation of new and changing information and circumstances, some of which can be traumatic or stressful, and lead to the emergence of resilient behaviour. Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak and Hawkins (2002:17) refers to the W.T. Grant Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Competence which defines cognitive competency in two ways namely as "*the ability to develop and apply the cognitive skills of self-talk, the reading and interpretation of social cues, using steps for problem-solving and decision-making, understanding the perspective of others, understanding behavioral norms, and a positive attitude toward life*". The second aspect of cognitive competence is related to "*academic and intellectual achievement. The emphasis is on the development of core capacities including the ability to use logic, analytic thinking, and abstract reasoning*".

Cognitive competencies can be promoted within the middle adolescent by focusing on meta-cognition abilities, processes or outcomes, which incorporates logical, analytic and adaptive thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, planning, goal-setting, positive self-talking skills as well as creativity. The various competencies (attitudes, knowledge, understanding, values and skills) form part of the keystones of resilient modalities.

1.8.7. Modalities

In the Ontological and Epistemological approach, modalities are a significant aspect because it refers to the differing and varying levels of a middle adolescent's state or quality of being. *"The research of modality on a philosophical plane may be called Tropology (from the Greek for 'figure', tropos) based on Aristotle's understanding thereof. Modalities are seen as attributes of relations (or of any things, in relation to existence). Modalities are distinguished with reference to their frame of reference (type). The four major types of modality (which may also be more briefly called 'modes'), are the natural (circumstances or context in which it occurs), temporal (timeframe or frequency) and extensional (instances of a universal occurrence), and the logical (differences and similarities in behaviour and the results of their interplay) modalities. Modalities are neither entirely subjective, nor entirely objective, but relate to causal and inductive reasoning"* (Sion, 1996:82). The resilience modalities of the middle adolescents will be explored in this research.

1.8.8. Middle adolescents

According to Gouws and Kruger (1994:4) it is difficult to delimit the adolescent phase in terms of chronological age, but it is generally accepted that the onset is usually at age 13 for boys and age 12 for girls until the age of 21. The adolescent life stage could also be separated into several ages namely early adolescence (10-12 yrs), mid-adolescence (13-16 yrs), and later adolescence (17-21 yrs). *"Middle adolescents are the ages between 13 to 15 years characterised by a time of heightened self-awareness, sexual stirrings, peer bonding, risk taking and increased independence. The middle years is a dynamic time when young people ride the waves from childhood to adulthood"* (Council of Northwest Education, 2001:1).

Adolescence is the life stage that bridges childhood and adulthood. The middle adolescent developmental stage is characterised by changes on a physical, emotional, cognitive and social level. Inherent to this phase is the development of

personal identity, psychological autonomy, self-regulation and psychological maturity based on the impersonation of role models. Le Roux (1992:3) adds to the characteristics that mark this developmental phase as the development of a moral code of ethics, self-discovery and identity formation and social independence. In this research, the target population will be 14-year old middle adolescents in grade 8. The quality of the middle adolescents' resilience modalities are reflected in their school related behaviour in the school context and it is therefore important to define all the concepts distinctly.

1.8.9. School related behaviour in the school context

The school context must be conducive to the holistic development of its learners, which include the emotional, social, cognitive, physical, moral and normative aspects of the middle adolescent. Positive school related behaviour that the middle adolescents must exhibit, that reflect their ability to utilize their resilience modalities in the school context would include having supportive relationships and adjusting to school life (attendance, participation in extracurricular activities). Academic achievement, peer acceptance, showing pro-social and normative behaviour (keeping to the regulations and rules of the school), complying with task requirements, actively participating in developing skills, self-identity and being future orientated (career planning) are also positive school related behaviour. It is necessary for the middle adolescent to identify and utilize the various assets in the school context to develop and enhance their resilience modalities that could lead to favourable school related behaviour. According to Benard and Marshall (2001:4) resilience in middle adolescents are measured by manifested competence, self-regulation socially appropriate conduct and academic achievement.

1.9. RESEARCH PROGRAMME

- ✘ Chapter 2 will deal with issues relating to the nature, origin, development and appraisal of emotional competencies in middle adolescents within the school context.
- ✘ Chapter 3 will encompass the nature, characteristics, development and appraisal of social competencies in middle adolescents within the school context.
- ✘ Chapter 4 will deal with the nature, characteristics, development and appraisal of cognitive competencies in middle adolescents within the school context.
- ✘ Chapter 5 will contain the Resilience Enhancement Kit design to enhance the emotional-, social- and cognitive modalities of resiliency in middle adolescents within the school context.
- ✘ Chapter 6 will encompass the empirical research design.
- ✘ Chapter 7 will provide a summary and findings of the research and will present conclusions and recommendations of the research.