

**EVALUATION OF AN EMOTIONAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN
IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL SETTING IN HARTBEESPOORT,
NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

By

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**A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
MSW Play Therapy**

**In the
Department of Social Work and Criminology
Faculty of Humanities
at the
University of Pretoria**

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March 2015

Pretoria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty for being the driving force in my life and providing me with the strength and ability to know that with Him nothing is impossible.

A very special thank you to my supervisor, Prof. C.S.L. Deport, for her continuous support, motivation and guidance. I highly respect and value your contribution.

To my family, friends and colleagues who supported, prayed and believed in me.

Thank you to Doxa Deo School, Xanadu for permitting me to do my research at the school.

ABSTRACT

EVALUATION OF AN EMOTIONAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL SETTING IN HARTBEESPOORT, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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Investing in a child's emotional awareness allows for evident improvement in positive behaviour and rich development on all levels of functioning. Children who are emotionally aware have the knowledge of the innate nature of emotions as well as the ability to acknowledge and experience emotions. The importance of the development of emotional awareness is often overlooked, this more so in the South African educational system. It is for that reason that the goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an already developed Emotional Awareness Programme within a specific school setting. The study was based on evaluating the effectiveness of the Emotional Awareness Programme within a private school setting.

The focus of the study was on children in the middle childhood phase of development and to evaluate whether emotional awareness can be taught within a classroom setting with the aid of an Emotional Awareness Programme. Emotional awareness in this study was not viewed as a stand-alone concept but contextualised as a prerequisite for emotional intelligence. The study further aimed to evaluate whether the implementation of the Emotional Awareness Programme for seven weeks with grade three learners had

an influence on their emotional vocabulary, emotional expression and emotional awareness in general.

The study was quantitative in nature as seen in the structured guidelines in terms of the modules and activities of the Emotional Awareness Programme and the predetermination of all that forms part of the research process, i.e. goal, objectives, type, design and research methodology. The study was based on applied research as it focused on an immediate issue in the discipline. The data collected from the standardised questionnaire, particularly the Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale for Children (LEAS-C) indicated that it is possible to enhance not only the emotional awareness of children in middle childhood but also the emotional vocabulary and emotional expression. It is therefore recommended that this Emotional Awareness Programme be incorporated within the South African school curriculum and possibly be stretched over a period longer than seven weeks. Inclusion of a broader target market for future research is also believed to be essential.

Key Concepts

- Emotional awareness;
- Emotional intelligence;
- Emotional Awareness Programme;
- Middle childhood;
- Children.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1. 1 INTRODUCTION

Evaluating the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme with children in the middle childhood developmental phase within an educational setting served as the main goal and purpose of this study. The reasons for implementing and evaluating the Emotional Awareness Programme were based on the view that investing in the emotional awareness of children leads to a noticeable improvement in positive behaviour and the enhancement of all levels of their being (Knoetze, 2012:2; Jameson, 2004). This investment further takes the form of children acknowledging and experiencing emotions, as well as gaining the insight that emotions are a natural part of human life. Furthermore, children who are emotionally aware would be more open to the acquiring of skills for the socially acceptable expression of emotions (Blom, 2006:123). The concept emotional awareness has limited focus, particularly in the academic discourse, as compared to the concept emotional intelligence (Knoetze, 2012). However, its significance in the development of children cannot be dispelled. Emotional awareness can be defined as “having the ability to distinguish one emotion from another as well as the level of emotion complexity inherent in the description of emotion experiences” (Bajga, Ciarrochi, Lane & Deane, 2005:569). Emotional awareness in the context of this study, however, refers to the level of knowledge children have in terms of specific emotions and its impact on their emotional and social development (Knoetze, 2012:105).

The study further focused on the emotional awareness of children, particularly in the middle childhood phase of development. Middle childhood (six to twelve years old) has been labelled as the latency stage by Freud’s psychoanalytical theory, characterised by repressed sexual and aggressive urges in addition to the development of personality, motivation, cognitive skills and interpersonal relationships (State University, 2013). For the purpose of this study, the respondents were children in middle childhood between the ages of nine and ten years.

The seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme which was evaluated for the purpose of this study was developed by Knoetze (2012) to address various emotional aspects of children in middle childhood, which are fundamental in expanding their emotional knowledge base in order to develop emotional awareness (Knoetze, 2012:140). Knoetze (2012) essentially developed a seven-module Emotional Awareness Programme in order to develop insight into emotion and its effect on the daily life of the child in middle childhood. The seven modules of the Emotional Awareness Programme are aimed at achieving specific goals, namely building and strengthening the relationship between educators and learners, supplying knowledge of different emotions, obtaining emotional language, developing and showing empathy, developing emotional regulation as well as acquiring and expanding of problem solving and decision making skills (Knoetze, 2012:140-142). This programme, with the aim of determining whether “emotional skills could successfully be developed during class activities”, was developed, implemented and evaluated with a sample of 40 Afrikaans-speaking learners/respondents in a public school in the Limpopo Province (Knoetze, 2012:136). It has, however been, recommended that more empirical evidence is needed to add to the validity and reliability of the Emotional Awareness Programme, specifically in different educational settings. The focus of this study was therefore on the evaluation of the effectiveness of this previously developed Emotional Awareness Programme in another educational setting. The educational setting within the context of this study was English and Afrikaans-speaking grade three learners at a private school in Hartbeespoort in the North West Province. In evaluating the effectiveness of the Emotional Awareness Programme various aspects needs to be considered in order to fully understand the Programme and its possible effects on the child in the middle childhood developmental phase. An overview of these aspects is discussed in the following section.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of literature on the emotional awareness of children in middle childhood revealed that three aspects are deemed necessary for the researcher; these aspects include the concept emotional awareness, emotional awareness programmes, and the

child in the middle childhood development phase. The researcher provides a brief overview of these aspects with an in-depth literature review in chapter two.

1.2.1 Emotional awareness

A child being aware of his/her emotions is pivotal, not only to avert the manifestation of negative behaviours such as aggression and anger, but also to prevent future emotional as well as social challenges. Emotional awareness as one of the key concepts of this study delineates the ability to differentiate emotions from one another (Bajga et al., 2005:569). In addition to this description, Flavell (in Bajga et al., 2005:569) postulates the notion that emotional awareness is also regarded as a cognitive skill which endures a process of development analogous to cognitive theorist, Piaget's description for general cognition. Relating to emotional awareness is the concept emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, on the other hand, is defined as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and the feelings and emotions of others, to discriminate amongst them and to use this information to guide one's feelings and actions" (Salovey, Brackett & Mayer, 2004:5). Emotional intelligence can thus be seen as the outcome of emotional awareness and can be seen as an important element of the Emotional Awareness Programme which will form part of the discussion in the next sub-section.

1.2.2 Emotional awareness programmes

Various emotional awareness programmes have been implemented across different disciplines, from medicine and psychology to the field of education. Research studies previously carried out in educational settings indicate the importance and advantages of implementing emotional awareness programmes in schools, with both social and educational advantages, decreased exclusion rates, as well as an improvement in self-awareness and peer relations (Lee & Wright, 2006:187). The authors (Lee and Wright, 2006:187) further add that school-going children who are able to express, comprehend and handle their feelings/emotions present behaviour which is more "relaxed biologically, less prone to being easily upset, more popular with peers and teachers and are able to attend to learning". The implementation of an emotional awareness

programme was therefore valuable specifically to the child in the middle childhood development phase owing to specific developmental milestones to be reached during this phase. These milestones are briefly discussed in the next sub-section.

1.2.3 Middle childhood as developmental phase

The respondents of this research study are ambassadors of the middle childhood developmental phase (six to twelve years of age). Children during this phase of middle childhood development experience developments on a physical, cognitive, social and personality level (McGoldrick, Carter & Garcia-Preto, 2011:31; Louw & Louw, 2007). The phase of middle childhood, as compared to the preceding early childhood and trailing adolescence phase, is said to be a period of relative calm and stability (Louw & Louw, 2007:214). This calmness mostly refers to the gradual physical development, as cognitive, social, emotional and self-concept development still hold importance during this phase (Louw & Louw, 2007:214). The physical developments lead to the characteristic awkward appearance owing to rapid growth in arms as compared to the chest. Cognitive developments, on the other hand, are said to be more rapid as compared to the physical developments during this stage (Louw & Louw, 2007:217). Children during this stage have acquired the capacity to plan short-term goals and have acquired, or are in the midst of acquiring, the skill of planning long-term goals with an increased understanding that problems may have different solutions (Rudd, 2008:64). Rudd (2008:65) further highlights the fact that during this phase of development children know and think about emotions, “deal with the emotions of others, listens to a story and answer questions about it appropriately”. It can therefore be seen that a child during the middle childhood developmental phase has various cognitive developmental milestones which have to be met as the formal (primary) school setting is usually entered. The above-mentioned cognitive development further flows into the evident increase in language skills, such as improved vocabulary and sentence construction, as well as an increase in academic achievement (Louw & Louw, 2007:220-222). With regard to personality development Hughes, as cited in Louw and Louw (2007:241), states that during this phase children need to develop competence in areas such as school adjustment, peer relationships, rule abiding and academic achievement.

A considerable amount of emotional development also occurs during middle childhood as there is an increase in the ability, not only to understand complex emotions, but also to use “self-initiated strategies for redirecting feelings” (Louw & Louw, 2007:244). Research confirms this as it emerged that children in this phase tend to experience most of their involvement on an emotional level and also that emotions are linked to high levels of intensity during this stage (Knoetze, 2012:2). Goldrick et al. (2011:36), in addition to Smith and Hart (2011), are of the opinion that girls during this stage of development become more skilled at “reading verbal and non-verbal emotional signals and at expressing and communicating their feelings”. Furthermore, emotional awareness is regarded as the key to the overall wellbeing of a child in middle childhood, as the total being can be affected by emotional insecurity and instability (Knoetze, 2012:3). An integrated functioning of all elements of a child for well coordinated intellect, emotions, senses and body as a whole as the concern of the Gestalt approach forms the premise on the following section on the theoretical framework which the study is based on.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the Gestalt approach is awareness, specifically relating to being conscious about one’s existence and current moments, and it provides the foundation for the study (Joyce & Sills, 2010:31; Mann, 2010:29). The aim stated above is in accord with the views of Shale (2004:52) who highlights that “increasing awareness is the core of gestalt therapy”. Having said that, the researcher is of the opinion that the Gestalt approach was the most applicable theoretical point of departure for this study as it is based on awareness, more specifically emotional awareness. Furthermore, this approach advocates that service users/respondents do their own feeling, sensing, seeing and interpreting (Grant, 2010:1). Henderson and Thompson (2011:221) further emphasise that no other theory builds the capacity of clients to be more aware of themselves than the Gestalt theory does. In relation to the above, the Gestalt approach is based on an existential framework, implying that it has phenomenological, experiential, existential and awareness elements. These key elements can be summarised as the therapist/researcher aimed to focus on clients/respondents’

perceptions and understanding of reality, and to help them to take responsibility for their reality (thoughts and feelings) by aiding awareness of actions and experiences (Grant, 2010:2).

The researcher is of the opinion that the Gestalt approach has strong developmental (capacity-building) features as there is great belief in the potential and ability of people to solve their own challenges, with the liberty of assistance seeking when deemed necessary. This is confirmed by the deduction that the Gestalt view of human nature is positive, meaning that people are capable of self-regulating and subsequently achieving a sense of unity and integration in their lives (Henderson & Thompson, 2011:221). Self-regulation from a Gestalt theory point of view requires knowing and owning, this is a way for individuals to satisfy their ever-arising needs and thereafter maintaining balance (Blom, 2006:23). As the premise of the Gestalt approach is about the “here and the now” as well as the “what and how”, it allows for the realisation (awareness) and ultimately the utilisation of this potential (Brownell, 2008:11). This realisation and awareness, particularly emotional awareness within the context of this study, would allow not only for emotional awareness about themselves but would also aid in the understanding of emotional expression in others (Knoetze, 2012:3).

A holistic understanding is thus achieved, giving rise to the Gestalt concept of holism and ultimately leading to self-regulation. Holism may be considered as the most important concept of Gestalt theory with the entirety being more than the sum of its parts (Blom, 2006:22). In the context of the study, this alludes to emotional awareness having an effect on other aspects such as behaviour, academic performance and general well-being.

The rationale discussed in the following section gives more light to the importance of this study.

1.4 RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Emotional awareness is regarded as important as it aids holistic wellbeing (Blom, 2006). In addition, knowledge of emotions and the effect of emotional experiences are said to have great value for the child in the middle childhood (Knoetze, 2012:2). Many children are, however, faced with the unfortunate dilemma of not being in the position to be aware of their emotions and emotional experiences. An Emotional Awareness Programme was subsequently developed to enhance the emotional awareness of children in middle childhood within a public educational setting (Knoetze, 2012). This programme, with the aim of determining whether “emotional skills could successfully be developed during class activities”, was developed, implemented and evaluated with a sample of 40 Afrikaans-speaking learners/respondents in a public school in the Limpopo Province (Knoetze, 2012:136). It has, however been, recommended that more empirical evidence is needed to add to the validity and reliability of the Emotional Awareness Programme, specifically in different educational settings. The aim of this study was therefore to evaluate this Emotional Awareness Programme with a group of English-and Afrikaans-speaking children in the middle childhood developmental phase within a private school in the North West Province.

The purpose of the study was thus to play a role in sealing the identified research gap by implementing the Emotional Awareness Programme within a different educational setting in order to draw conclusions about its applicability. The study was guided by the following main and sub-hypotheses:

Main hypothesis

If an emotional awareness programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, then the level of emotional functioning of the learners will be enhanced.

Sub-hypotheses

- If an emotional awareness programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to be **in contact with their emotions** will be enhanced.
- If an emotional awareness programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to **discriminate between different emotions** will increase.
- If an emotional awareness programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, they will gain the ability to **verbalise and 'own'** their emotions.

In addition, the researcher was of the opinion that this study had the potential to contribute to the understanding and emotional enhancement of the child in middle childhood with regard to their emotional awareness and assist in improving the Emotional Awareness Programme for future use. The manner in which the researcher went about testing the main and sub-hypotheses is elaborated upon in the next section.

1.5 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal and the objectives of the study were as follows:

1.5.1 Goal

To evaluate the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme in order to enhance the level of emotional functioning of children in middle childhood in a private school setting in Hartbeespoort in the North West Province.

1.5.2 Objectives

- To conceptualise emotional awareness theoretically with specific emphasis on children in the middle childhood developmental phase within an educational setting.

- To evaluate whether an emotional awareness programme will enhance the ability of learners in middle childhood to be in **contact with their emotions**.
- To evaluate whether an emotional awareness programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to **discriminate between different emotions**.
- To evaluate whether an emotional awareness programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to **verbalise and ‘own’ their emotions**.
- To draw conclusions about the applicability of the Emotional Awareness Programme in a private school setting.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study conducted was quantitative in nature as this intended structured approach towards systematic and standardised data collection allows for the determination of the “extent of a problem, issue or phenomenon”, in this case emotional awareness (Kumar, 2005:12; Fouche & Delpont, 2011:66). The quantitative nature was further intensified by the structured guidelines in the form of modules and activities of the Emotional Awareness Programme that was to be implemented and evaluated.

The researcher trained the educator on how to implement the Emotional Awareness Programme as part of the educational curriculum rather than implementing it herself, allowing the researcher to objectively measure the respondents’ level of emotional awareness (dependent variable). The educator, with a four year bachelor’s degree (BprimEd), was trained on middle childhood as a life phase and emotional awareness, as well as the seven modules and accompanying activities that make up the Emotional Awareness Programme. The training of the educator aimed to improve the understanding of the emotional wellbeing of learners in middle childhood as well as the different aspects of the Emotional Awareness Programme, ultimately leading to the accurate implementation of the Emotional Awareness Programme (Knoetze, 2012:14-15) as part of grade three activities and curriculum i.e. during school hours.

A quantitative study often ends with confirmation or disconfirmation of the hypothesis that was tested. The objectives of the study were to evaluate the effectiveness of the Emotional Awareness Programme regarding the respondents' ability to be in contact with, to discriminate between as well as to verbalise and 'own' emotions based on the sub-hypotheses of Knoetze's (2012) study. Chapter three indicates whether the study allowed for confirmation or disconfirmation of the hypothesis and sub-hypotheses.

Applied research was used for the purpose of this study as it was concerned with the immediate problems/issues of the discipline rather than with formulating or refining a theory (Fouche & De Vos, 2011:94). The study focused on the evaluation of an Emotional Awareness Programme which aims to solve current and possibly future challenges. The research study could further be regarded as evaluative, as the intention was to determine whether the "social intervention has produced the intended result" (Babbie, 2007:350).

This research study falls under the class of experimental research designs, more specifically the quasi-experimental design with the comparison group pre-test post-test design (Fouche, Delpont & De Vos, 2011:145,148,149). In the context of this study, both the experimental and comparison group were exposed to the pre-test and post-test by measuring the dependant variable (emotional awareness).

The study population were all the children in middle childhood (between nine and ten years of age) in grade three at a private school in Hartbeespoort, North West Province. By utilising the non-probability/availability sampling technique (Neuman, 2011:242) a school was selected as a result of personnel's motivation to be involved in the study and there being age-appropriate learners in the school. The researcher further used simple random sampling to select the experimental group which was English-speaking from two grade three classes in the specific school and the remaining group was thus the comparison group and Afrikaans-speaking. Simple random sampling allowed for individuals to have an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Strydom, 2011:228).

Based on purposive sampling, according to the researcher's judgement (Creswell, 2013:151), the following criteria were used to select a sample of respondents from the study population:

- Learners in middle childhood (9-10 years old).
- Grade three learners attending the identified school.
- Learners who have English or Afrikaans as their first language.

In total, the sample comprised of thirteen respondents in the experimental group and six respondents in the comparison group.

A standardised questionnaire, particularly the Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale for Children (LEAS-C) developed by Lane and Bajgar (2003), was utilised as the data collection method for this study. The questionnaire, with twelve open-ended questions was used as the pre-test as well as the post-test for the selected group of respondents and was used as a group-administered questionnaire by the researcher. Quantitative data analysis was conducted in this study after the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme had been completed and the pre- and post-tests administered. The researcher used the SPC XL software for Microsoft Excel program. An in-depth description of the research methodology will be given in chapter three.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study consisted of a small sample of grade three learners. It is therefore important to note that the findings could not be generalised when interpreting the data.
- The number of questionnaires that could have been used in the study decreased from sixteen to thirteen in the experimental group and from nine to six in the comparison group owing to absenteeism either during pre- or post-testing.
- The experimental group consisting of English-speaking respondents and the comparison group of Afrikaans-speaking respondents led to the questionnaires being administered in both Afrikaans and English. This allowed the opportunity

for groups to possibly interpret information differently as a result of language. However, due to the simple wording of the twelve open-ended questions of the questionnaire, the possibility of different interpretation was limited (see Appendixes B and C).

- The Emotional Awareness Programme was originally in Afrikaans as it was administered to only Afrikaans-speaking grade three learners. The Emotional Awareness Programme was therefore translated and the essence of some of the content of the programme may have been lost in translation. This possibility was, however, overcome through a peer reviewing system in order to maintain the substance of the programme.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter one: A general introduction to the study, focusing on a brief literature review, theoretical framework, rationale and problem statement, the goal and objectives of the study, a summary of the research methodology used as well as the limitations of the study.

Chapter two: The focus of chapter two is on an in-depth review of literature regarding a discussion on emotional awareness as a concept, the Emotional Awareness Programme as well as the middle childhood developmental phase.

Chapter three: The focus of chapter three is on a detailed description of the research methodology used in the study as well as on the empirical findings.

Chapter four: Key findings, conclusions and recommendations is the focus of chapter four.

1.9 SUMMARY

Emotional awareness forms an integral part of the child in the middle childhood developmental phase which is the targeted population of this study. The lack of development with regard to emotional awareness has negative effects on the child in the middle childhood developmental phase. The implementation of the Emotional

Awareness Programme thus has the potential to contribute positively to children exposed to it.

The next chapter focuses on a thorough literature review in order to provide a clear and rounded understanding of emotional awareness of children in the middle childhood developmental phase.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of the South African formal education curriculum for a considerable period of time was on embracing and emphasising the significance of cognitive skills which involved attaining the ability to acquire, recall and apply knowledge in order to survive and make logical decisions (Bar-On, Maree & Elias, 2006:1). This focus on these skills is currently still of great importance. These skills are often assessed and confirmed through intelligence quotient (IQ) tests which provide an estimation as to how well one will fare academically. It is however, argued that an IQ score does not determine social relations and ability to face and handle life challenges; an EQ (emotional quotient) score would however be more significant in this regard as it measures emotional and social intelligence (Bar-On et.al, 2006:2-4). This chapter shows that the development of emotional awareness as a prerequisite for emotional intelligence tends to override IQ. The chapter focuses on various aspects of middle childhood development as well as emotional intelligence and emotional awareness as concepts and the significant role it plays within the academic setting. In order to have a holistic understanding the researcher conceptualises the terms emotion, emotional awareness as well as emotional intelligence in the first section of this chapter which follows.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISING EMOTION, EMOTIONAL AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In order to fully understand the concept emotional awareness as the main focus of the study, it is important to conceptualise and understand not just the meaning of emotional awareness but also the concepts emotion and emotional intelligence. These three concepts are discussed in this section of the chapter.

2.2.1 Emotion

Systems of classifications often differ, resulting in the identification of approximately eight main emotions, namely anger, fear, sadness, enjoyment, love, disgust, shame and

surprise (Morris, 2009:74). Emotions are, however, broadly defined as “any strong feeling, as joy, sorrow, or fear” (*Collins: 175 Years of dictionary publishing, 2007:537*). Nevertheless there is common agreement that emotion comprise of a range of components where the subjective feeling felt by individuals is only a single element (Ojala, 2013:170). Juslin (2011:3) refers to what he describes as a widespread definition of emotions by asserting that emotions are often said to be crisp and powerful responses to significant events in the interpersonal or intrapersonal spheres, often with a social character, with various sub-components such as appraisals, psychological adjustment, personal feelings, expressive behaviour and action tendencies. Ojala (2013:170), on the other hand, further deliberates on this definition by emphasising the terms important/significant events and ‘appraisals’ which, according to her, point to its evaluative nature and the fact that emotions seem to have preferences. This evaluative nature mentioned by Ojala (2013:170) is seen as providing individuals with information as to whether the situation faced with is in line with “a valued state (positive emotions) or is a mismatch (negative emotions)”. The author further adds that people are not always cognisant of the abovementioned evaluations made. The two basic functions of emotions therefore come into play. Morris (2009:75) gives the first function of emotions as drawing people towards other people, events or objects which warrant survival with the opposite and second function also being true i.e. emotions driving individuals away from people, objects and events which threaten survival. Ojala (2013:170) comprehensively defines emotion as follows: “Emotions can increase our heart rate; activate certain brain regions; make us cry, laugh, or trash furniture; make us more prone to remember certain memories than others; and change our perception of the world – however momentarily”. Smith and Kirby (2009: 1353) further add to the aforementioned definitions by asserting that emotions are relational as they centre around the repercussion of a situation on an individual's needs, wishes, aspirations, worth and capabilities.

A distinction between the noticeably very strong emotions like fear and anger and those less apparent emotions like guilt and shame which require conscious awareness of them presents the developmental importance of emotional awareness for children in this

regard (Knoetze, 2012:86). Kostelnik, Gregory and Soderman (2012:127) furthermore state that positive emotions provide that re-assurance to children that everything is well and allow them to engage in new and previously experienced activities considered pleasurable. Contrary to what was mentioned above, negative emotions which involve danger or discontent leads to awareness that something may be wrong. Emotions, whether positive or negative, therefore play an important role and provide the necessary guidance in the daily lives of children. Macklem (2008:55) further emphasises that children who are punished when experiencing negative feelings often associate the 'negative' feeling with the negative consequences which in turn increase their misery and potency of the emotion. This so much so that the author (Macklem, 2008) asserts that it becomes a challenge for children to regulate their emotions effectively.

Emotions and their complex nature allow for three levels of emotions to emerge. These levels of emotions, namely biological, behavioural and cognitive as cited by Webster Stratton (1999:285) in Knoetze (2012:89), can be described as follows:

Biological: The biological or biochemical level involves the physical reactions and developments such as the flow of blood, breathing and heart rate which the automatic nervous system regulates. The person who feels anxious or nervous will also often experience an increased heart rate and sweaty palms.

Behavioural: The behavioural level, on the other hand, lies in the expression of actions as an indication that emotions are being experienced. Emotional responses include "facial expressions and behaviour such as crying, sullen gazes, withdrawal from interactions with others, defiant actions and delayed responses" (Knoetze, 2012:89).

Cognitive: What the researcher considers a level up is the cognitive level which involves thought, spoken or written language where feelings or emotions are categorised, and the child is in a position to state phrases such as "I am feeling happy". Emotions in which ever form are experienced by both children who are traumatised or those who are not. This is seen in findings from studies indicating that even children exposed to domestic violence in their families display both internalising problems

(depression and anxiety) as well as externalising behaviours (rebelliousness, aggression, and anger) (Maliken & Katz, 2012:720).

Knoetze (2012:89) further integrates the levels mentioned above into the biological, sociological, psychological and cognitive perspectives. In order to understand emotion holistically and from various perspectives a summary of these perspectives is provided. The biological perspective, according to Knoetze (2012:90), involves “affective behaviour brought about as a result of an emotion and is externally visible”. Emotion is defined as “a state of arousal characterised alteration of feeling tone and by physiological behavioural changes” (Miller-Keane & O’Toole, 2005:189) with externally visible behaviour alluded to by Knoetze (2012), referring to laughing, crying and smiling. These biological or physiological origins of emotions are contested by the sociological perspective which brands emotions to be socially constructed as the view is that which is to be felt (feelings or emotions) is defined by culture, beliefs and norms (Turner & Stets, 2005:2).

Highlighting the integration between the levels of emotion and the various perspectives discussed in this section, Knoetze (2012:91) specifically makes mention of the relevance of the cognitive perspective owing to the view that there are strong ties between emotion and cognition. Furthermore, the psychological perspective comprehensively defining emotion as “a complex state of feeling that result in physical change which influence thought and behaviour” (Cherry, Sa), allows for the representation of each of the abovementioned perspectives. Throughout the divergent definitions of emotion, the link between the levels of emotion and the various perspectives of emotion is thus clear.

The researcher will further strive to capture the important role of emotion in the development of children. The substance of emotion is seen in Knoetze (2012:87) highlighting the importance and centrality of brain functioning by stating that it is the core of all systems which play a part in the behaviour of humans. Taken from the section above and the aforementioned statement, it can therefore be seen that emotions play a pivotal role in the emotional development of children. This assertion is compliment by a statement made by Kagan (2007:1) indicating that all emotions start off

as a result of “brain activity”. The author further adds the element of psychological activity which in turn is activated by the state of the brain which is embedded in the individual’s biology and history. Since the target group of this study is children in middle childhood, the importance of emotions according to Panju (2008:6) is relevant, as indicated in the following:

- **Our bodies talk to us through our emotions** by informing us that they need to be happy and healthy.
- **Our emotions communicate messages to others.** A smile would attract people while a frown or angry face would let people know that they should stay away.
- **Our emotions are impulses that compel us towards** or away from certain actions i.e. emotions informs us when to act and when not to i.e. ‘fight’ or ‘flight’ scenarios.
- **Emotions enhance our thinking.** Emotions form an important element of information processing i.e. a positive mood can elicit good ideas while a foul mood can lead to less creativity.

The awareness of all the processes involved with the experience of emotion is complex and the significance of this awareness is discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Emotional awareness

As far back as the 1980’s, Lane and Schwartz (1987) defined emotional awareness as “the ability to identify and describe one’s own emotions, and those of other people”. Two decades later Deutschendorf (2009:36) further links emotional awareness to the meaning or purpose of life by stating that “a person has to become aware of emotions before being in a position to serve their meaningful purpose in life”.

Lahaye, Mikolajczak, Rieffe, Villanueva, Van Broeck, Bodart and Luminet (2010:418) assert that emotional awareness is made up of the unique manner in which individuals convey, analyse and transmit interest of their own emotions and that of others. The authors (Lahaye et al., 2010:418) also incorporate the concept emotional competence as a term which includes various aspects such as “identification of the emotions, regulation of emotions, emotion expression, understanding others’ emotions, empathy”,

emotional awareness therefore forming an important part of emotional competence. The emotional experiences mentioned above involve the individual sensing changes in the body (Van der Veek, Derkx, de Haan, Benninga & Boer, 2012:113). These authors also believe that this sensing of change in the body is in fact what an emotion is. The importance of attributing the correct cause of emotion to the bodily changes experienced is however emphasised as authors (Kooiman, Bolk, Rooijmans, & Trijsburg, 2004) believe that incorrectly attributing physical signs such as an increase in heart rate to physical diseases instead of psychological element such as fear may lead to incorrect medical consultation. The importance of emotional awareness is further highlighted through linking unexperienced and unexpressed negative affect with the consequences of its being a pathogenic reaction to environmental pressure (Lane 2006, 117). The author (Lane, 2006) therefore highlights a cognitive-developmental model of emotional awareness which states that awareness of one's own feelings is a cognitive skill similar to that described by infamous cognitive theorist Piaget.

The terms emotional intelligence and alexithymia are at this point also important to mention, especially with regard to emotional awareness and the false attribution of physical signs from the body as discussed above. Emotional intelligence can be defined as "awareness of one's own emotions and moods and those of others, especially in managing people" (*Collins: 175 Years of dictionary publishing*, 2007:537). Alexithymia, on the other hand, relates to individuals' being unable to recognise or articulate their own emotions with the core elements involving challenges around the identification of emotions, verbal expression of emotions and the inability to distinguish physical sensations from emotions (Lahaye et al., 2010:418; Lumley, Gustavson, Partridge & Labouvie-Vief, 2005:330). These two concepts of emotional intelligence and alexithymia the researcher believes are closely linked to the key concept of this study, namely emotional awareness. There is an assumption that patients who are suffering from symptoms which cannot be explained by the medical fraternity, are not as aware of their emotions and have methods of coping with daily challenges which are maladaptive as compared to individuals who do not have this challenge (Van der Veek et al., 2012:113). The Dutch authors therefore undertook a study over a three-year period with children between seven and 18 years who were suffering from functional abdominal

pain in order to debunk the abovementioned assumption on emotional awareness and coping. The results showed that children without functional abdominal pain scored higher on most facets of emotion awareness than those children with functional abdominal pain. Furthermore, children with functional abdominal pain were surprisingly more aware of the link between physiological sensations and emotions (Van der Veek et al., 2012:112-113). A lack of emotional awareness could therefore be attributed to alexithymia as one of the possible reasons, emphasising the importance of this study (evaluation of an emotional awareness programme within the educational setting).

The deliberations about the key concept of emotional awareness and especially the important link between emotional awareness, emotional intelligence and alexithymia are supported by Knoetze (2006) who states that emotional awareness is a “knowledge base of emotional intelligence”. This therefore warrants greater deliberation on the concept of emotional intelligence, especially with regard to minimising the confusion between the two concepts. To this end the concept of emotional intelligence is discussed in the next section.

2.2.3 Emotional intelligence

Authors such as Bar-On, Maree and Elias (2006:xiv) very often use emotional intelligence and the terms emotional awareness, emotional competence and emotional literacy interchangeably with these terms often focusing on the following:

- The ability to recognise and understand emotions and to express feelings non-destructively;
- The ability to understand how others feel and relate to them cooperatively;
- The ability to manage and control emotions effectively;
- The ability to manage and change the emotions generated by change, and to adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature; and
- The ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivated.

In an attempt to understand whether emotional intelligence can be taught and the importance attached to this education, Bar-On (2007:1) poses three questions and attempts to answer them through tackling various aspects of emotional wellbeing. The questions are:

- What does it mean for people to be emotionally intelligent?
- Is it important for people to be emotionally intelligent?
- Can we educate people to be emotionally intelligent?

In an endeavour to answer the first question there is deliberation on emotional intelligence and this concept is linked to the core of this study, namely emotional awareness. The ability to comprehend and convey a message, interact and understand others and handle life's challenges are characteristics of persons who are emotionally and socially intelligent (Bar-On, 1997; 2000; 2005 as cited in Bar-On, 2006:1). The basis of this emotional intelligence lies in the ability to be aware of not only their emotions but also who they are as a person in terms of strengths and weakness as well as constructive expression of emotions (Bar-On, 2007:2). Bar-On further states that emotional and social intelligence "is to be aware of the feelings and needs of others, and to be able to establish and maintain cooperative, constructive and mutually satisfying relationships" (Bar-On, 2007:2). A clear link between emotional intelligence and emotional awareness is emerging, more specifically that emotional awareness is a prerequisite for emotional intelligence. Since Bar-On (2007:2) avers that emotionally intelligent people have the self-motivation to successfully and optimistically deal with changes in personal and environmental arenas to flexibly solve challenges which may arise, the assumption arises that emotional intelligent people conduct themselves responsibly and are stable human beings. Emotionally intelligence can be taught, however, an assessment of areas which are lacking, needs to be done first (Bar-On, 2007:2). These emotional intelligence tests as laid out by Bar-On (2007:4) often focus on the assessment of the following aspects:

- **Intrapersonal:** Focusing on the assessment of self-regard, emotional awareness, assertiveness, independence and self-actualisation.

- **Interpersonal:** Assessing skills such as empathy, social responsibility as well as interpersonal relationship.
- **Stress management:** Assessing two aspects, namely the constructive management of emotions (stress tolerance) as well as constructive control of emotions (impulse control).
- **Adaptability:** Reality testing, flexibility and problem solving are tested under this segment of the emotional intelligence testing
- **General mood:** Assessing happiness and optimism levels of the person being tested in order to establish how positive and content one is with oneself and life in general.

The importance of being emotionally intelligent, defined as “a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions comprising the affective aspects of personality”, is emphasised in various studies conducted (Bar-On 1997; 2001; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; Bar-On, Handley & Fund 2005; Krivoy, Weyl Ben-Arush & Bar-On 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2001 as cited by Bar-On, 2006:4-9). The findings from these studies indicate that there are positive relations between being emotional intelligent and the impact it has on physical health, school performance, social interactions, in the workplace, the process of self-actualisation as well as subjective well-being. Bar-On (2006:9) maintains that people can be educated to be emotionally intelligent and experiences enhanced performance in school, the workplace as well as in clinical settings such as medical and psychiatric settings e.g. stress management in cardiovascular patients.

Without emotional awareness, this important construct and skill of being emotional intelligent, which has a considerable impact on the performance of human beings, would not be possible or might not have the full impact that is expected. Bar-On (2007:12) in highlighting the importance in educating children to be emotional and socially intelligent in order to produce productive adults and communities, again emphasises the importance of the implementation of the emotional awareness programme for children in middle childhood in the educational setting for emotional intelligence to be enhanced at a young age. In order to have a comprehensive

understanding of emotional awareness as the main concept of this study, its various elements such as the levels of emotional awareness and emotional awareness as a cognitive ability are discussed in the next section.

2.3 EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

The complex nature of emotional awareness requires a closer look into the emotional awareness model. This involves the levels of emotional awareness and emotional awareness as a cognitive ability (Knoetze, 2012:108). These two aspects will be discussed in this section.

2.3.1 Levels of emotional awareness

A model developed to study the conscious processing of emotion called the Levels of Emotional Awareness was developed by Schwartz and Lane (Lane, 2006). Lane (2006:117) explains that this model considers the description of cognition by Piaget to be similar to the ability of individuals to identify and describe emotion within themselves and in others. Bajgar et al. (2005:569) agree, adding that the Levels of Emotional Awareness (LEA) model is focused on how multifaceted and structured emotion is. This, the authors (Bajgar et al., 2005) state, is the ability to discriminate one emotion from the other as well as to describe emotional experiences comprehensively. An essential view of this model is that “individual differences in emotional awareness reflect variations in the degree of differentiation and integration of the schemata (elementary knowledge structures) used to process emotional information, whether that information comes from the external world or the internal world through introspection” (Lane, 2006:117). An assessment based on the performance of the arrangement and complexity of emotional awareness was done, resulting in the Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale for Children (LEAS-C) (Lane, 2006). This is a standardised measuring instrument which is also used in the context of this study.

Lane (2006:117) contends that the five levels of emotional awareness are a description of emotional experience and cognitive organisation in ascending order (awareness of bodily sensations, action tendencies, single emotions, blends of emotions, and

combinations of emotional experience). A detailed account of these levels includes the following:

Levels 1 (physical sensations) and 2 (action tendencies) phenomena, viewed in isolation, would not typically be considered indicators of emotion, but when emotional responses occur these are fundamental components. The peripheral physiological arousal and action tendencies associated with emotion are implicit in the sense that they occur automatically and do not require conscious processing in order to be executed efficiently. Levels 3, 4 and 5 consist of conscious emotional feelings at different levels of complexity. These conscious feelings constitute explicit aspects of emotion in the sense that (1) they are conscious and (2) they have the requisite qualitative characteristic needed to unequivocally classify these experiences as emotional feelings. The levels of emotional awareness framework, therefore, put implicit and explicit processes on the same continuum, and at the same time distinguish between types of implicit (level 1 vs. level 2) and explicit (level 3 vs. level 4 vs. level 5) processes (Lane, 2006:117).

In concluding the levels of emotional awareness, a tabulation of various authors' contributions of the different levels of emotional awareness follows. This is presented in a table of comparison developed by Knoetze (2012:109-111) identified from authors (Blom, 2004:95; Tileston, 2004:30; Hein, 2003; Lane and Schwartz, 1987:142) and follows in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Levels of emotional awareness

Levels of emotional awareness		Characteristics	Perceptions, Sensations	Emotional skills/abilities
Level 1	Emotional numbness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No emotion is experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to identify and experience emotions correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No emotional skills which results in emotional numbness
Level 2	Physical sensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience emotion as a physical sensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical sensation Tummy aches or headache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of specific feelings accompanying specific experiences
Level 3	Primary experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of emotion Experience it as a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaction prone Self-conscious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of emotions

		<p>highlighted energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot verbalise the emotion 		
Level 4	Verbal blockage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of emotion • Does not possess the emotional vocabulary to express the experienced emotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive labelling for future reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the emotion • Determining the emotional need • Taking appropriate corrective action • Reaction to emotion
Level 5	Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of the difference between the basic emotions • Understand the difference in intensity of emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single emotions out • Comprehension of the natural worth of emotions e.g. fear vs. protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising and identifying emotions • Emotional self-control • Achievements of positive goals • Stronger ability to complete tasks
Level 6	Causality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of emotions take effect • Can tie specific reasons to emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of amalgamation of emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on emotion: <p>Low awareness: Reflecting after emotion was experienced (sleeplessness)</p> <p>High awareness: Experience and identification happens fast enough for reflection to take place.</p>
Level 7	Empathy and interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full awareness of emotions in oneself and others • Able to manage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of combinations of combined emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of intensity differences within different emotions

		emotion affect on oneself and others		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conception of complex emotional combinations
Level 8	Prediction of emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate • Purposefulness • Decision-making abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimal awareness of emotional content and its effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of similar situations e.g. where anxiety or fear were experienced • Motivated into directions where positive emotions were experienced • Considerations of others-<i>what doesn't feel good to me most probably doesn't feel good for another</i> • Better decision-making skills

Source: (Knoetze, 2012:110)

Table 2.1 provides an overview of how emotional awareness can develop and also an indication of its cognitive nature i.e. that emotional awareness can be taught. This cognitive ability is discussed in the next sub-section.

2.3.2 Emotional awareness as a cognitive ability

Emotional regulation is seen as one of the developmental achievements such as crawling, walking, speech and fine motor skills which are to be learned by the child (Webster Stratton, Sa). Similar to Piaget's theory of cognition, Bajgar et al. (2005:572) are of the view that emotional awareness, too, is a cognitive ability which can be taught and which children can learn.

The Levels of Emotional Awareness model mentioned above indicates that emotional awareness is embedded in cognitive schemata with its complexity differing between individuals reflecting past experiences relating to emotions (Thomas, 2005:192). Thomas (2005) describes the function of a schemata to be that of a filter between internal and external emotion-related information. The relationship between emotions and emotional awareness and the brain is further highlighted by Ojala (2013:168) who states that there is a connection between the emotional concepts mentioned and the primary defence and motivational systems of the brain. These primary functions of the brain are known as the behavioural inhibition system (BIS) (involved in threat detection and negative emotion activation) and a behavioural activation system (BAS) (positive threat activation) which is an appetitive system (Ojala, 2013:170).

As much as there are various elements attached to emotional awareness to be successfully developed and executed, it still remains a fundamental developmental milestone in the life of the child in the middle childhood developmental phase. Children in the middle childhood developmental phase in particular were chosen for this study as children in this phase present favourable characteristics for their emotional awareness as well as emotional intelligence to be enhanced. These characteristics of children in the middle childhood phase of development are discussed in the next section.

2.4 THE CHILD IN THE MIDDLE CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE

The middle childhood phase of development hosts children between ages six and 12 years (Middle childhood..., 2008:1). This phase of middle childhood is associated with various developments on a physical, cognitive, social and personality level (McGoldrick et al., 2011:31; Louw & Louw, 2007). Middle childhood marks a phase when children begin to become aware of their internal qualities in addition to self-esteem and self-concepts which are shaped (Middle childhood..., 2008:1). The physical, emotional, academic, social and global aspects of development all play a part in the formation of a child's self-concept with self-concept evaluation being self-esteem (Middle childhood..., 2008:2). These developments, including emotional growth, occur concurrently where the one affects the other (Middle childhood..., 2008:1). Teachers and caregivers can foster self-esteem by presenting opportunities for growth and success. This study

focuses on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social areas of developments during the middle childhood phase of development. The most visible development during this phase is, however, the physical development which is the first area of development to be discussed in the next sub-section.

2.4.1 Physical development within the middle childhood developmental phase

Children during this phase of development on average grow between two and three inches per year during their primary school years (Middle childhood..., 2008:2). There is also an increase in muscle mass which contributes to the increased strength in girls and boys (Lightfoot, Cole & Cole, 2013:391). Other physical developments include the replacement of most of the milk teeth, the refinement of psychomotor skills and the brain reaching an adult size (Louw & Louw, 2007:215). The above-mentioned developments often lead to the characteristic awkward appearance due to rapid growth in arms as compared to the chest (Louw & Louw, 2007:215). Many fine and gross motor skills are mastered by children during the middle childhood developmental phase (Middle childhood..., 2008:2). Increased abilities to write, use scissors to cut and type on a keyboard are some of the fine motor skills which develop and increases in the ability to jump, skip, run and muscle coordination are experienced. There are, however, differences in the motor development between the two genders. Boys often excel more in activities which require gross motor skills while girls tend to be advanced in fine motor skills such as writing and drawing (Lightfoot et al., 2013:396). The earlier years of middle childhood, between ages six and eight, are also a period of continuous growth of the brain and development of specific brain functioning which is thought to underlie changes in cognitive development (Lightfoot et al., 2013:398). These changes in brain structure and functioning are believed to play an important role in better attention span, solving complex problems as well as engaging in self-reflection. It has also been found that there is a strong link between brain functioning and emotional awareness as being consciously aware of affective situations necessitates “participation of structure that sub-serve attention and mental representation” (Lane, 2006:116).

This stage is generally met with good health but sicknesses such as asthma and allergies become a common occurrence during middle childhood. The onset of puberty takes place towards the end of middle childhood with obesity statistics rising in children aged between six and 11 years old (Middle childhood..., 2008:2). The importance of these developments and a child reaching his or her developmental area milestones is seen in the assertion that children deprived of support may develop emotional, physical or social symptoms such as fears, phobias, anxieties, headaches, stomach aches and aggressive or withdrawn behaviours (McGoldrick et al., 2011:31). The phase of middle childhood, as compared to the preceding early childhood and trailing adolescence phase, is said to be a period of relative calm and stability (Louw & Louw, 2007:214). This calmness mostly refers to the gradual physical development, as cognitive, social, emotional and self-concept development still hold importance during this phase (Louw & Louw, 2007:214). Strength and size do, however, increase significantly, though at a slower pace than during earlier years (Lightfoot et al., 2013:390). The child within this age range is furthermore said to be occupied with building on that which has already been acquired within the previous developmental phase (Rudd, 2008:64). These physical aspects of development of the child in middle childhood, like with all aspects of development, depend on genetic factors as well as interaction with the environment (Lightfoot et al., 2013:390). It is suggested that children during this phase of middle childhood be supported and engaged in physical and emotional scenarios with their developing peers (Middle childhood..., 2008:1). The advancement in formal education for children in middle childhood also requires additional support as a result of the cognitive development which is described in the next sub-section.

2.4.2 Cognitive development within the middle childhood developmental phase

A comparison between the abovementioned physical developments and cognitive development during middle childhood shows that the latter is more rapid than the former (Louw & Louw, 2007:217). Cognitive development in children is seen in their ability to now plan both short-term and long-term goals, they are in a much better position to understand the complexity of problems and have the knowledge that more than one

solution is available to resolve a problem (Rudd, 2008:64). Rudd (2008:66) further highlights the fact that during this phase of development children know and think about emotions, “deals with the emotions of others, listen to a story and answer questions about it appropriately”. The researcher is of the opinion that this could be attributed to the improved memory, increased ability to understand complex explanations, longer attention span as well as their need to ask questions regularly as highlighted by McGoldrick et al. (2011:36). Therefore during the middle childhood phase a child has various cognitive developmental milestones which have to be met as the formal (primary) school setting is usually entered. This confirms to Piaget’s theory, which identifies the middle childhood development phase as having the concrete operational stage at its centre where mental operations are being used (Louw & Louw, 2007:217). Concrete operational development involves the child’s now being able to internalise actions that fit into a logical/rational system and also order, separate, combine and alter actions or objects (Lightfoot et al., 2013:402). The concrete nature arises as a result of operations being carried out in the presence of that which is being thought about. Lightfoot et al. (2013) continue elaborate on various new features of thinking characteristic of this new stage of Piaget’s cognitive development in which the child in middle childhood engages. This study broadly focuses on eight of these new features, namely: decentration, conservation, logical necessity, identity, compensation, reversibility, egocentrism decline as well as changes in social relations (Lightfoot et al., 2013:402-404).

- **Decentration** involves children being able to consider and notice multiple attributes of an object at a time rather than one aspect; the ability to categorise according to various criteria also emerges.
- Piaget’s term of **conservation** involves the understanding that certain properties of an entity will remain the same even when other properties are altered in a superficial way e.g. the amount of liquid transferred from a tall thin glass will remain the same as when emptied into a short glass.

- **Logical necessity** as the third feature involves the acquired confidence that it is logically necessary for the conservation of certain qualities regardless of the appearance changing.
- Children also now start to realise that an amount can remain the same when no additions and subtractions have been made (**Identity**).
- **Compensation** involves the ability of children to mentally compare the changes in two aspects of a problem and how the one compensates for the other.
- **Reversibility** is a mental operation in which a child realises that the effects of one operation can lead to another being cancelled out or reversed.
- Children during middle childhood portray a **decline in egocentrism** which results in more effective communication about objects which cannot be seen by the listener, thinking about the perception held by others, and awareness that a person can feel one way but act in another.
- Various **changes in social relations** are observed during this stage. Children can now play games with rules and can regulate how they interact with others through rules. Judging behaviour of others involves the incorporation of the intentions had and the belief that the crime committed should be met by a fitting punishment.

The information processing theory adds another perspective to the cognitive development of children in the middle childhood development phase. Cognitive changes during middle childhood, according to information processing theorists, involve more efficient and rapid mental operations, increased attention and memory capacity as well as acquiring various mental strategies (Lightfoot et al., 2013:409). The information processing perspective also states that children in middle childhood have increased processing speed and capacity and experience gains in inhibition (Berk, 2010:303). The role of memory and the changes it endures characteristic of middle childhood is based on the following three factors (Lightfoot et al., 2013:409):

- Increases in the speed and capacity of working memory, where working memory is seen as a source of enhanced intellectual performance and is considered the

'active' memory system which manipulates and holds information needed for reasoning;

- Increases in knowledge about the things one is trying to remember. Older children tend to have more knowledge about certain subjects as a result of the accumulation of experience; and
- The acquisition of more effective strategies for remembering. Children increasingly use memory strategies (deliberate use of actions to enhance remembering) during middle childhood. Strategies in this regard involve rehearsal (repetition of material that one is trying to remember), organisational strategies (mentally grouping of material to be remembered) and elaboration (children finding a connection between two or more items to be remembered).

The above-mentioned cognitive development further flows into the evident increase in language skills, such as improved vocabulary and sentence construction, as well as an increase in academic achievement (Louw & Louw, 2007:220-222). Additionally, there is a transition from the belief in magical characters as Father Christmas and the tooth fairy to an increase in the ability to logically reason about the world in which they live (Defeyter, 2011:288). With regard to personality development, Hughes, as cited in Louw and Louw (2007:241), states that during this phase children need to develop competence in areas such as school adjustment, peer relationships, rule abiding and academic achievement. Emotions form a very important part of these areas mentioned above. Development with regard to the emotional front is thus discussed in the next section.

2.4.3 Emotional development within the middle childhood developmental phase

Emotions play an important role in infant actions and regulation from when they are born. Emotions and emotional expression can therefore be seen to be two of the core elements of the psychological makeup and development of humans (Mash & Wolfe, 2010:44). Mash and Wolfe (2010) continue to highlight the importance of the expression, experience and regulation of emotion and the regulation between a child's social development and interaction. Social and emotional development and the

subsequent skills which stem from what was learned or observed from home and thereafter the environment or community (media, religious, educational institutions) (Mosley, 2005:1).

The natural tendency of children to be aware of the emotional cues of others allows for them to in turn be in tune with and process their own emotions (Mash & Wolfe, 2010:45). Knoetze (2012:102) also mentions that children who are emotionally aware have the ability to understand their own and the behaviour of others (peers and adults). This understanding and ability to process situations (class, sport, and social interactions) further leads to the development of self-confidence to persist even when faced with challenges. Knoetze (2012:103) states that the focus of emotional education is emotional awareness and emotional intelligence which, although similar, have their differences.

Emotional development during middle childhood further also involves the development of self-conscious emotions, emotional understanding as well as emotional self-regulation (Emotional and social,[sa]:2). These three emotional developments are elaborated upon as follows:

Self-conscious emotions

Children experience various self-conscious emotions in different circumstances as discussed below:

- Self-conscious emotions such as pride and guilt are experienced without adults being present.
- Shame is experienced when infringing rules beyond an individual's control and when being blamed.
- Pride allows for the encouragement to take on future challenges.

Emotional understanding

Emotional understanding comes into play during middle childhood and refers to the following:

- ❖ The description of emotion by the child in middle childhood is done by referring to internal states as compared to physical events.
- ❖ Emotional understanding implies an increase of awareness regarding the diversity of emotions and emotional experiences.
- ❖ Emotional understanding further refers to the realisation that the way an individual reacts emotionally may not be a true reflection of his or her feelings and the ability to predict feelings about situations based on their past experiences.
- ❖ It also refers to a rise in empathic reactions due to social and cognitive experience.

Emotional regulation

Emotional regulation during the phase of middle childhood development refers to the following:

- The ability to deal more broadly with circumstances which are emotionally rising during this specific phase of development is due to increased capacity to self-regulate.
- Once the abovementioned self-regulation has been mastered by the child in middle childhood, emotional self-efficacy is the feeling of being in control of one's emotional experiences.
- Emotional regulation further refers to positive characteristics of children who have mastered the art of self-regulation, including children who are more empathic, pro-social, showed positive moods as well as being liked by their peer group.

In addition, emotional awareness is regarded as the key to the overall wellbeing of a child in middle childhood, as the total being can be affected by emotional insecurity and instability (Knoetze, 2012:3). A considerable amount of emotional development also occurs during middle childhood as there is an increase in the ability not only to understand complex emotions, but also to use “self-initiated strategies for redirecting feelings” (Louw & Louw, 2007:244). Research confirms this as it appears that children in

this phase tend to experience most of their involvement on an emotional level and also that emotions are linked to high levels of intensity during this stage (Knoetze, 2012:2). As the child in middle childhood enters the formal school setting, educators play a pivotal role in the child's emotional development. Educators can, however, do more harm than good when ill-equipped in the field of emotional awareness. Educators should therefore have knowledge about this field in order to provide the same amount of cognitive and emotional education within the educational setting (Knoetze, 2012:2-4). Early studies conducted by Knoetze (2006) indicate that educators value emotional awareness as a contributing factor to the optimal and healthy development of children, as well as the key role played by the educational system in this endeavour. The advantages within the educational setting and beyond are corroborated by research, indicating that social and emotional competence within children is linked to academic success and personal wellbeing, as well as community contributors (Jameson, 2004).

The focus of emotional competence as a crucial element for successful social development comprises three basic components, namely experiencing, expressing and understanding emotion (Smith & Hart, 2011:414). Experiencing of emotions refers to both awareness and recognition of own emotions, as well as effective regulation of emotional expression (Smith & Hart, 2011:417). The child in middle childhood, according to Smith and Hart (2011), utilises cognitive and problem-solving strategies with distancing from stressors as he or she approaches adolescence under the experiencing component. Expression during middle childhood is often met by a gradual understanding that expressing intense emotions does not always aid goal achievement; emotional expression which is therefore less dramatic and direct comes to the fore (Smith & Hart, 2011:418). The authors lastly mention the broadening of the emotional knowledge base of children in middle childhood with a greater understanding that people may react differently to the same event. During this developmental phase children also portray a greater understanding of "multiple emotions, time course of emotions and social emotions" (Smith & Hart, 2011:419). McGoldrick et al. (2011:36), in addition to what has been mentioned above by Smith and Hart (2011), are of the opinion that girls during this stage of development become more skilled at "reading

verbal and non-verbal emotional signals and at expressing and communicating their feelings”.

2.4.4 Social development within the middle childhood developmental phase

The importance attached to emotions in a social context is seen in the following statement: “Emotions are the ‘glue’ binding people together and generating commitments to large-scale social and cultural structures” (Turner & Stets, 2005:1). In addition, they also conversely mention that emotions can lead to people pushing one another away and tearing down the same social structures mentioned above.

The surfacing of peer relations and the influence it has on development and behaviour tends to be one of the most noteworthy changes in middle childhood (Lightfoot et al., 2013:465). During this developmental phase children spend more of their time with their peers and less with parents, gaining an increased sense of independence from family and an increased capability to make behavioural choices (Middle childhood..., 2008:1). This confidence from family and parents probably stems from the fact that children start to reason less based on external factors (rewards and punishments) and more on an internal sense of wrong and right (Lightfoot et al., 2013:471). The family, particularly parents, nevertheless do still play a very significant role within the life of a child during the middle childhood phase as the home offers a secure setting (mostly) and therefore plays a pivotal role in social development (Louw & Louw, 2007:246-247). The role of parental support during this phase becomes especially important to help children to cope with peer pressure (McGoldrick et al., 2011:37). With peer relationships also playing a vital role in social development during this phase, friendships are often based on faithfulness, loyalty and generosity and take on functions of comradeship, emotional bonds and gender role reinforcements (Louw & Louw, 2007:257-260). Children in middle childhood also start to engage in pro-social moral reasoning which is thinking which involves making the decision as to engage in pro-social behaviour (sharing, helping, caring for others) or not (Lightfoot et al., 2013:477). Research has found that children’s reasoning reflects in two ways, namely children either focus on themselves

and on what helping someone else would benefit them or are more empathic to someone experiencing difficulty (Lightfoot et al., 2013:478).

In the search of answers to the question “Who am I ?” believed to be at the basis of each developmental phase according to Erikson’s theory, the child in middle childhood is faced with the challenge of industry versus inferiority (Lightfoot et al., 2013:466). Having reached a sense of industry at the end of middle childhood, children believe that they are competent in performing activities which adults and peers value (Lightfoot et al., 2013:466). Feeling inadequate and not capable of mastering expected tasks at the end of middle childhood are characteristics of having a sense of inferiority. Inferiority and the abovementioned industry have an effect on how children think and feel about themselves (Lightfoot et al., 2013:466). Friendships therefore play a significant role in the lives of middle childhood children which matures to have a foundation on psychological connections. Sex segregation, on the other hand, is also said to be on the increase during this phase as boys tend to play more roughly and in bigger groups while girls are more likely to form close friendships with a small number of girls (McGoldrick et al., 2011:36). Social comparison- “the process of defining oneself in relation to one’s peers”- is also a very significant part of middle childhood as a result of their increased interactions with peers and their questioning of themselves with regard to their abilities (Lightfoot et al., 2013:467). Social comparison is more often than not linked with competitiveness. Status, popularity, and social competence therefore have great significance in their lives (Middle Childhood..., 2008:1). Research has indicated that during middle childhood children refer to themselves in terms of their appearance, their psychological characteristics, their activities as well as their relations to others with the significance attached to each varying with age (Lightfoot et al., 2013:466).

Expanding on the above statement the age breakdown during middle childhood leads to the knowledge that children’s self-concept is expressed through categorical (clear-cut and uncompromising) statements (4 to 7 years) as well as comparative judgements (8 to 11 years) (Lightfoot et al., 2013:467). The researcher is, however, of the opinion that a lack of ‘normal’ family life and complex peer relations as a result of unfortunate and

often traumatic circumstances may contribute to the lack of emotional development in children. The statement that “siblings, divorce, and blended families all have effects on the emotional development of children” substantiates the researcher’s view (Middle Childhood..., 2008:1). This assertion is further supported by the above-mentioned argument that traumatised children tend to suppress emotions and therefore their emotional development (Blom, 2006:123). The importance of parents demonstrating support and encouragement with regard to emotional expression therefore greatly contributes to effective emotional expression and behaviour (Maliken & Katz, 2012:720). According to the sociological perspective, emotions are said to be socially constructed based on the belief that people’s emotions stems from how they were socialised into culture and how they participate in social structures (Turner & Stets, 2005:2). Gender-stereotyped parenting therefore forms a significant part of the debate around emotions and social development. It has been revealed that more and more evidence point towards fathers tending to engage in gender-stereotyped socialisation of emotions, more so in male perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) (Maliken & Katz, 2012:718). The above statement refers to issues of socialisation where male children are taught not to cry or show emotions and rather suppress them while their female counterparts are allowed and encouraged to show emotions.

As much as cognitive changes may seem to be determined by biological aspects such as brain development and specific internal mental processes, researchers argue that social and cultural context also plays a pivotal role in these cognitive changes (Lightfoot et al., 2013:414). The premise being that people -children within the context of this study- learn from the vocabulary, responses, expressive actions as well as shared perception of emotions of others (Turner & Stets, 2005:2). Concepts and developments considered as being universal, such as Piaget’s acquisition of conservation mentioned above, have been found to lag behind by a year in children from non-industrial societies who have not attended school (Lightfoot et al., 2013:415). Lightfoot et al. (2013:416) highlight the view of developmentalists, namely that standard Piagetian tasks may not fully take into consideration the cognitive abilities of children who are unschooled as well as children who are not conversant with the language of the administration of tasks.

It is important to understand the link between emotional, social, biological and cultural developments during middle childhood. Emotions are known for their biological component and the biological processes which play a part in the creation of emotions in humans (Turner & Stets, 2005:4). The biological effect is further seen when people's emotions (anger, sadness, fear) override that which has been set by culture (Turner & Stets, 2005:4). In a further attempt to bring it all together, emotions are said to involve the following elements:

The biological activation of key body systems; (2) socially constructed cultural definitions and constraints on what emotions should be experienced and expressed in a situation; (3) the application of linguistic labels provided by culture to internal sensation; (4) the overt expression of emotions through facial, voice and paralinguistic moves; and (5) perceptions and appraisals of situational objects or events (Turner & Stets, 2005:9).

Turner and Stets (2005:9), however, argue that all these elements do not have to be present for emotions to exist. They highlight that people may find it challenging to label their feelings as a result of physiological changes experienced in the body or being unsure as to the events which triggered the feelings. Very relevant to this study is the statement by Turner and Stets (2005:4) that emotional arousal is often repressed which leads to individuals not experiencing emotions or signalling it to others.

Consensus around the universality of emotions exists. Happiness, sadness, anger and fear are termed primary/basic/fundamental emotions, common to all individuals and underpinning that from which other emotions are derived (Turner & Stets, 2005:11). Some other emotions, often referred to as secondary emotions, and which are also considered universal, include guilt, shame, pride, optimism, pessimism and disappointment, amongst others (Turner & Stets, 2005:19-20). Emotions being socially constructed stems from emotions influencing and being influenced by interactions in value, norms, and value-laden and regulated social structures (Turner & Stets, 2005:2). Moral behaviour also features much more strongly as children start to reason less based on external factors (rewards and punishments) and more on an internal sense of

wrong and right (Lightfoot et al., 2013:471). In contrast to Kohlberg's six stages grouped into three levels (pre-conventional, conventional, post-conventional) of moral development, Piaget believed in the existence of only two stages of moral development, namely heteronomous and autonomous (Lightfoot et al., 2013:473). This shift from heteronomous and autonomous moral reasoning, according to Piaget, is embedded in the context of playing games with peers with associated rules and observations (Lightfoot et al., 2013:472-3).

The link between the abovementioned physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and emotional awareness gives rise to the importance of the implementation of the Emotional Awareness Programme in the middle childhood developmental phase. This statement is substantiated in the next section where the researcher provides an overview of the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme which was evaluated in this study.

2.5 EMOTIONAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME

The Emotional Awareness Programme focuses on six areas, promoting and encouraging aspects of emotional growth and emotional awareness over a period of seven weeks. Developed against the backdrop of the Gestalt play therapy perspective the Emotional Awareness Programme specifically focuses on developing and enhancing the emotional awareness of grade three learners in the middle childhood phase of development within a specific educational setting. It is however possible to utilise this Programme with learners from grades one to seven (Knoetze, 2012:162). The main aim is however to establish whether skills to be more emotionally aware could be taught during class activities through the utilisation of the Emotional Awareness Programme (Knoetze, 2012:138). In order to establish whether this is possible, the researcher trained the educator on emotional awareness, the child in middle childhood as well as the Emotional Awareness Programme. The educator presented the Emotional Awareness Programme as part of her daily class activities. The Emotional Awareness Programme is divided into seven modules i.e. one module per week with each module consisting of three to four activities which will briefly be discussed in table

2.1 below. The seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme with its six main goals and the accompanying activities is summarised and tabulated as follows:

Table 2.2: Summary of Emotional Awareness Programme

WEEK	ACTIVITIES
<p>Week one: Build and strengthen relationship with learners</p> <p>A safe and secure relationship between learner and educator is essential for the development of emotional awareness (Knoetze, 2012:140).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Who am I”- Each learner is given the opportunity to be the main attraction of the day where the rest of the class gathers information about him/her and a photo is displayed on the bulletin board for the day. • Class compliments- This activity is aimed at promoting group cohesion as the educator and other staff members compliment the class on various aspects. The learners should write down these compliments on a chart provided for this purpose and later share their feelings of pride. • My rights in class- A story about animals with rights and responsibilities embedded in it is read in class with the educator facilitating a discussion on learner’s rights in class afterwards.
<p>Week two: Knowledge of different emotions</p> <p>The first step in acquiring emotional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotion Bingo- Each learner receives an Emotion Bingo Card

<p>awareness lies in having the knowledge of various emotions and being aware of their consequences (Knoetze, 2012:141).</p>	<p>and ten emotion labels which should be used to fill a row of four and shout “BINGO”. The educator also asks the learners questions from the “Bingo question card” supplied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory Match- Learners are paired and given a Memory Match play set and rules with the aim of the learners recapping on the new emotion words and knowledge acquired through a fun game. • Speech- Each learner prepares a speech on a card drawn from a bag of 30 cards with different emotions on it. The speech is based on the topic, “The day when I was_____”.
<p>Week three: Emotional language Emotional language allows for the expression of feelings through acquired emotional vocabulary (Knoetze: 2012:141).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Zaki’s balloon full of mixed up feelings”- The story of “Zaki’s balloon full of mixed up feelings” is read to the class by the educator. A discussion of the learners’ feelings regarding the story is followed by the story being read again and the learners having to write down all the emotions which they can identify. A listening test for the week follows as more questions on emotions are incorporated. • Emotional vocabulary- Flashcards

	<p>with different emotions on it is used to find emotion words to replace basic emotion words such as sad to gloomy and good to marvellous. Each learner also has the task of choosing one positive and one negative emotion and searching for situations where these emotions occurred during the day. A paragraph on the emotion and situation is then written down for the next day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charades- Emotion picture cards are drawn from a bag of cards and the emotions are to demonstrate in a game of charades.
<p>Week four: Empathy</p> <p>Having an understanding of their own emotions and its consequences, the learner also develops the ability to recognise and comprehend the emotions in others (Knoetze: 2012:141).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding emotions of others. Facial expression and body language- This activity involves an explanation of what empathy entails followed by a brainstorming session on what the learners believe empathy entails. Each learner thereafter receives a picture where a person is comforted in an empathetic manner and will have to write a story of what happens in the picture and the best possible empathetic reaction for the

	<p>situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of empathic feelings “Bessie must stay dry”- The story “Bessie must stay dry”, portraying a boy’s empathy towards his dog is read to the class. A discussion of a list of questions is followed ensuring that the learners have an understanding of empathy towards others. • Reinforcement Construct sentences- Each learner is provided with a sentence sheet with five themes. The learners should construct sentences based on these themes which encourage empathetic responses from learners. • Empathy modelling and speech- Learners prepares speeches on one of three topics where empathy has to be illustrated.
<p>Week five: Emotional regulation</p> <p>Regulating emotions plays a vital role in the life of learner who is equipped with knowledge about the various emotions and awareness of these emotions in self and others. Emotional regulation allows for a learner to use the knowledge about emotions positively and to their advantage (Knoetze: 2012:141).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualisation- This activity takes place where there are no disturbances. A provided text is then read to the learners in a very calm and low toned voice followed by a visualisation text and a discussion on prescribed questions. Each learner is provided with nine

	<p>pictures which they have to sort out in the correct order indicating the process of gaining control over a previously unknown situation indicating emotional regulation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement of concept- This activity reinforces the content of the previous activity by learners role playing situations on flashcards emphasising emotional regulation. • Rehearsing emotional regulation in practices- The “Win the Wave” worksheet is distributed which allows the learners to understand situations and the consequences of practicing and not practicing emotional regulation. This activity is done over two days where the opportunity for learners to educate the rest of their family on emotional regulation is possible.
<p>Week six: Problem solving Problem-solving and decision-making skills play an important role in the expansion of emotional knowledge (Knoetze: 2012:142).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate a problem- Learners in groups of +- five are instructed to observe and take apart a pre-built figurine and thereafter reassemble it. The likelihood that the learners can rebuild it is low. The correct process of problem solving is then introduced to them. This process involves identifying the problem, generating solutions, evaluating

	<p>possible solutions and deciding on the best plan of action and applying it before evaluating the outcomes. This process is discussed in a child friendly manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving skills- The story of Maraai Maroela tree is read and the concept of problem solving is discussed based on the story's content. • Assess problem-solving skills- Each learner receives a worksheet with the problem solving steps. Three problems (fictional, previously experienced problem, an example problem from home or friends) will have to be solved using the steps.
<p>Week seven: Summarising and termination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of different emotions- Learners are guided to name as many emotions as possible followed by explanations of these emotions. Complex emotions are encouraged. Worksheets "Emotions for smart kids" and "Emotions in colour" are used to enhance the learners' understanding of the different ways in which the body experience different emotions. • Revision of different emotions-

	<p>Learners are divided into pairs and play the “Your face-my face” activity which serves as a measuring tool for the educator. This activity shows the learners’ knowledge of different emotions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision- Learners are required to cut out emotion words from a form received and match it to different emotion events on a different form. This will allow for the evaluation of the learners’ ability to match higher-level emotions correctly.
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Table 3.1 shows a comprehensive overview of the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme. The goal with the accompanying activities to reach this goal of each of the seven weeks is set out in the table. The effect of the activities and specifically the Emotional Awareness Programme was measured and tested with a standardised questionnaire for measuring emotional awareness in children before and after exposure to the programme. The Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale (LEAS-C) was the measuring instrument used for the purpose of the study and will be discussed in the next sub-section.

2.6 INSTRUMENTS TO MEASURE EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

Emotional awareness can be measured through various measuring instruments. The emotional awareness of children in particular has its own specific measuring instruments. This study focuses on two measuring instruments, namely the EAQ and LEAS-C as they are specifically designed for working with children and adolescents. Each instrument will briefly be discussed.

2.6.1 Emotion Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ)

Emotional awareness can be measured by a questionnaire called the self-report Emotion Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ) which was particularly designed for children (Rieffe, Oosterveld, Miers, Terwogt, & Ly, 2008). The developers of the questionnaire take specific cognisance of the peer, educational and family context of the children and aim at identifying children's thoughts and feelings about their own emotions and the emotions of others (Lahaye et al., 2010:419). This Emotion Awareness Questionnaire more specifically aims at measuring the following six aspects of emotional awareness (Van der Veek et al., 2012:114):

- Differentiating emotions (e.g. "Sometimes, I feel upset and I have no idea why").
- Verbal sharing of emotions (e.g. "I find it difficult to explain to a friend how I feel").
- Not hiding emotions (e.g. "When I am upset, I try not to show it").
- Bodily awareness of emotions (e.g. "When I am scared or nervous, I feel something in my tummy").
- Attending to others' emotions (e.g. "It is important to know how my friends are feeling").
- Analyses of emotions (e.g. "When I am angry or upset, I try to understand why").

These six aspects of emotional awareness are measured by asking the child respondents to indicate to which extent these six aspects are accurate and which relate to them as per a three-point scale (Van der Veek et al., 2012:114). Lahaye et al. (2010:419) stated that the Emotion Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ) was, to their knowledge, the first questionnaire which "aims to capture the emotion awareness of children".

2.6.2 Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale (LEAS-C)

The Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale (LEAS-C) was developed and utilised in 2003 by Bagjar and Lane (Knoetze, 2012: iii). The LEAS-C stems from the Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale (LEAS) which was developed to measure the diversity in

the presented complex nature of emotional awareness among adults (Bajgar et al., 2005:570). Considerable developments and findings with regard to the differences between gender were indicated where females were found to have higher levels of emotional awareness as compared to their male counterparts. Individuals scoring high in emotional awareness were also found to be more aware of their moods, thus preventing emotions clouding their judgement (Bajgar et al., 2005:571).

The LEAS-C has three components, namely the questionnaire, scoring manual and the glossary of words where the glossary of words consists of four levels (levels zero to three) based on emotional weight (Knoetze, 2012:175). The questionnaire, on the other hand, consists of twelve open-ended questions/scenarios which are scored according to the abovementioned glossary of words for emotional experiences of the self and those of others (Knoetze, 2012:176-177). The emotional awareness of the respondents is thereafter determined by the scoring of each of the twelve scenarios. The LEAS-C was used as the measuring instrument of emotional awareness of children in middle childhood in this study.

2.7 SUMMARY

Although the focus of the formal education system is on fostering and enhancing academic performance and holistic functioning of children through cognitive skill development, this chapter demonstrated the important and relevant contribution of enhancing emotional development, specifically the emotional awareness of children. Emotional awareness of children starts as early as when they are babies communicating their needs and learning from their caregivers and surroundings. This chapter was, however, more focused on the child in middle childhood, his or her development on a physical, cognitive, emotional and social level and the link to concepts emotional awareness and emotional intelligence.

The importance of conceptualising and contextualising emotion, emotional awareness as well as emotional intelligence was the focus as the researcher is of the opinion that there is significance in firstly understanding these concepts as the premise of this study.

The complex nature of emotional awareness was unpacked by looking at the emotional awareness model, specifically the levels of emotional awareness and emotional awareness as a cognitive ability (Knoetze, 2012:108). Furthermore, a discussion on measuring instruments of emotional awareness was discussed in this chapter with specific emphasis on the LEAS-C which is the measuring instrument for this particular study. The results obtained from using this measuring instrument as pre- and post-test for the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme with grade three learners are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Techniques used by researchers to convert data to a numerical format and subject it to statistical analysis is what authors Rubin and Babbie (2005:552) refer to as quantitative data analysis. Statistical analysis is furthermore described by Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2008:364) as procedures for “assembling, classifying, tabulating and summarising numerical data to obtain meaningful information”.

The process of analysing the data collected was guided by the standardised *LEAS-C Scoring Manual & Glossary* (Bajgar & Lane, 2003). Once data was collected, the researcher interpreted and organised the data through the use of computerised data analysis to configure the collected data into comprehensive information. As with the study by Knoetze (2012) from which the current study stems, the researcher, too, made use of the SPC XL software for Microsoft Excel as it provides the appropriate statistical analysis features to analyse the specific type of data collected for the study.

The impact of the Emotional Awareness Programme on variables measured in pre- and post-test of the experimental group and the comparison group, was statistically analysed and presented through graphs, diagrams and tables to give order, structure and meaning to the collected data.

The development of emotional vocabulary and levels of emotional awareness is the focus of the second sub-section on empirical data collected. The sub-section preceding it however focuses on the biographical profile of the respondents of the study. The chapter commences with the research methodology which guided the study as well as the ethical consideration on which the study was based.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was guided by the following main and sub-hypotheses:

Main hypothesis: If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, then the level of emotional functioning of the learners will be enhanced.

Sub-hypotheses

- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to be **in contact with their emotions** will be enhanced.
- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to **discriminate between different emotions** will increase.
- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, they will gain the ability to **verbalise and 'own'** their emotions.

3.2.1 Goal and objectives of the study

The goal and the objectives of the study were as follows:

Goal

To evaluate the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme to enhance the level of emotional functioning of children in middle childhood in a private school setting in Hartbeespoort in the North West Province.

Objectives

- To conceptualise emotional awareness theoretically with specific emphasis on children in the middle childhood developmental phase within an educational setting.

- To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will enhance the ability of learners in middle childhood to be in **contact with their emotions**.
- To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to **discriminate between different emotions**.
- To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to **verbalise and ‘own’ their emotions**.
- To draw conclusions about the applicability of the Emotional Awareness Programme in a private school setting.

3.2.2 Research Approach

The study was quantitative in nature as this intended structured approach towards systematic and standardised data collection allows for the determination of the “extent of a problem, issue or phenomenon”, in this case emotional awareness (Kumar, 2005:12; Fouche & Delpont, 2011:66). The quantitative nature was further intensified by the structured guidelines in the form of modules and activities of the Emotional Awareness Programme that was implemented and evaluated. The quantitative approach is labelled as structured owing to the predetermination of all that forms part of the research process, i.e. goal, objectives, type, design and research methodology as stated by Kumar (2005:12), as is the case in this study. The effectiveness of a quantitative approach, however, lies in the accurate and specific understanding of one aspect or part of a social problem which is already well-defined (Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:82). In the context of the study this was the level of emotional awareness of children in the middle childhood developmental phase.

The researcher trained the educator on how to implement the Emotional Awareness Programme rather than implementing it herself, allowing the researcher to objectively measure the respondents’ level of emotional awareness (dependent variable). Furthermore, this enabled the researcher to remain detached from respondents in order to draw conclusions which are unbiased (Fouche & Delpont, 2011:66). Fouche and Delpont (2011:66) further mention that a quantitative study often ends with confirmation

or disconfirmation of the hypothesis that was tested. Hypotheses can be tested in two ways: either in a straightforward way or in a null hypothesis way (predicting no significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable) (Neuman, 2011:183). In the context of this study, the goal was to confirm or disconfirm the sub-hypotheses at the end of the study as stated above.

3.2.3 Type of research

Applied research was used for the purpose of this study as it is concerned with the immediate problems/issues of the discipline rather than formulating or refining a theory (Fouche & De Vos, 2011:94). The study focused on the evaluation of the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme which aims to solve current and possibly future emotional challenges experienced by children in middle childhood. It furthermore aids practitioners in accomplishing tasks by being aware of children's level of emotional awareness and often emotional intelligence (Fouche & De Vos, 2011:95). In order to reach the goal of evaluating the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme, the data as stated above was obtained in a systematic standardised manner, giving rise to the evaluative nature of the research (Fouche & Delpport, 2011:66). The research study was further regarded as evaluative, as the intention was to determine whether the "social intervention has produced the intended result" (Babbie, 2007:350). The fact that the impact and outcome, or in layman's terms, the effectiveness of the Emotional Awareness Programme was evaluated serves as substantial motivation for the evaluative nature of the study.

3.2.4 Research design

This research study made use of an experimental research design, more specifically a quasi-experimental design, namely the comparison group pre-test-post-test design (Neuman, 2011:287; Fouche, Delpport & De Vos, 2011:145,148,149). In the context of this study, both the experimental and comparison groups were exposed to a pre-test by measuring the dependant variable (emotional awareness). The experimental group was subsequently exposed to the independent variable (Emotional Awareness Programme) for seven weeks and thereafter the dependant variable (emotional awareness) of both

groups was measured (post-test). The results/measurements from the pre-test and post-tests of both experimental and comparison groups were compared in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Emotional Awareness Programme as the independent variable.

3.2.5 Research methods

In this section, the researcher focuses on the study population and sampling, data collection as well the data analysis to provide insight into the methods utilised in this study.

3.2.5.1 Study population and sampling

The study population were all children in middle childhood (between nine and ten years of age), who were in grade three at a private school in Hartbeespoort, North West Province. This population led to the selection of a sample which is a “small portion of the total... population from which a representative selection is made” (Barker, in Strydom, 2011:224).

By utilising the non-probability/availability sampling technique (Neuman, 2011:242) a school was selected as a result of personnel’s motivation to be involved in the study and there being age-appropriate learners in the school. The researcher further used simple random sampling to select the experimental group from two grade three classes in the specific school and the remaining group was thus the comparison group. Simple random sampling allowed for individuals to have an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Strydom, 2011:228).

Based on purposive sampling, according to the researcher’s judgement (Creswell, 2013:151), the following criteria were used to select a sample of respondents from the study population:

- Learners in middle childhood (9-10 years old).
- Grade three learners attending the identified school.
- Learners who have English or Afrikaans as their first language.

In total, the sample comprised of 13 respondents in the experimental group and six respondents in the comparison group.

3.2.5.2 Data collection

A standardised questionnaire, particularly the *Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale for Children* (LEAS-C) developed by Lane and Bajgar (2003), was utilised as the data collection method for this study (see Appendix B). The University of Arizona's Department of Psychiatry in the U.S.A has provided the necessary permission to utilise the questionnaire in this study (see Appendix F). This questionnaire, with 12 open-ended questions, was used as the pre-test as well as post-test for both the experimental and comparison groups of respondents and was administered as a group-administered questionnaire by the researcher. As a result of the questionnaire being standardised, the validity and reliability has already been tested. Validity and reliability are important constructs which are often indistinguishable and unrecognisable and assists in the quest for honesty as well as trustworthiness of findings (Neuman, 2011:208). The standardised questionnaire utilised has shown high face validity, criterion validity as well as construct validity as it is a relevant measure of the variables in question and is constructed from literature on the subject (Knoetze, 2012:177-178). Evidence of the tested validity and reliability of the LEAS-C is further confirmed by the developers Lane and Bajgar (2003) stating that "Total scores have acceptable internal consistency (coefficient alpha=.66) and good inter-rater reliability ($r=.89$)".

The researcher trained the educator of the experimental group on middle childhood as a life phase and emotional awareness, as well as the seven modules and accompanying activities that make up the Emotional Awareness Programme. The training of the educator aimed to improve the understanding of the emotional wellbeing of learners in middle childhood as well as the different aspects of the Emotional Awareness Programme, ultimately leading to the accurate implementation of the Emotional Awareness Programme (Knoetze, 2012:14-15) as part of grade three activities and curriculum i.e. during school hours.

3.2.5.3 Data analysis

Data analysis has been extensively defined by many authors (Rapley, 2007; Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2007). The researcher's understanding of data analysis is the sifting/reducing of a world of raw information to an understandable and structured collection of information in the form of written language, graphs or numbers. For the particular purpose of this study, the researcher made use of quantitative data analysis. Quantitative data analysis can be understood as the manipulation of observations in order to explain and describe the phenomenon that the observations reflect in a numerical format (Babbie, 2007:405). In the context of this study the process of data analysis can be described as follows:

Subsequent to the completion of the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme and the administration of the pre- and post-tests, the data collected was coded with the help of the standardised scoring manual (see Appendix D). Following the development of data categories, the SPC XL Software for the Microsoft Excel program was used to process and interpret the data into comprehensible information (Knoetze, 2012:15). Once the data was entered the researcher made use of univariate analysis which is regarded as the simplest form of quantitative analysis (Babbie, 2007:409). With regard to this analysis, all the data collected on one variable (emotional awareness) was summarised in order to comprehend and utilise it properly (Strydom, 2011:254). This summary took the form of graphs, diagrams and tables which can be seen in the sections following the ethical considerations.

3.2.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are the principles and foundation on which researchers should evaluate their conduct and they should also make it part of their being (Strydom, 2011:113). These ethical considerations form part of three stages during a research project, namely during respondent recruitment, intervention or measurement procedures, and the release of results obtained during the study (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:181). The following ethical considerations are applicable throughout the three above-mentioned stages of the study:

3.2.6.1 Avoidance of harm

Avoiding harm of respondents can be regarded as the basic ethical rule in social research (Babbie, 2007:27). The research study involved human emotions; more specifically the emotions of children in middle childhood, and therefore particular cognisance of and care were given to the avoidance of emotional harm to the respondents. Harm on an emotional instead of physical level is often more difficult to anticipate (Strydom, 2011:115). The Emotional Awareness Programme, however, aimed at providing respondents with insight, skills and understanding of emotions (Knoetze, 2012:181). This investment in the emotional development of the respondents could have added to the avoidance of harm as they were more empowered to recognise harm. Having said this, the researcher took great care to avoid harm to respondents by thoroughly informing respondents about the potential impact as well as the opportunity to withdraw. The researcher and educator could refer respondents to the school counsellor for counselling should the need have arisen, but this was not necessary.

3.2.6.2 Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent implies that all relevant information about the study should be made known to respondents. The purpose of the study, the reason for the information needed from respondents, what the researcher expects from the respondents and the direct and indirect effect on the respondents refer to the type of information that has to be disseminated (Kumar, 2005:212). The respondents were asked to sign an informed assent letter while the parents or guardians signed a consent letter which explained all the relevant information such as the goal, methods and risks involved in the study (Strydom, 2005:59). The letters were in English in order for the respondents and guardians to have a clear understanding of the information regarding the study. The educator who formed part of the study also signed an informed consent form ensuring that she is informed about the procedure, potential risks; rights, benefits as well as her role with regard to confidentiality and avoidance of harm (see Appendixes G, H and I).

Informed consent, however, has a twofold nature. Firstly, it informs respondents about their rights and the research procedures (Letherby & Bywaters, 2007:78). Secondly, it protects the researcher from possible future accusations and helps prevent participants from being discouraged to participate. Respondents therefore had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time they wish to do so without any consequences (Strydom, 2011:115).

3.2.6.3 Violation of privacy/ anonymity/ confidentiality

Privacy involves aspects of personal privacy while confidentiality involves the confidential handling of information (Strydom, 2011:121). Anonymity, on the other hand, comes into play when a researcher is unable to match a response to a particular respondent (Babbie, 2005:64). In line with the view of Strydom (2011:121), the researcher is in a position to link a response to a respondent, but opts not to do so publicly: this is considered to be confidentiality.

The researcher ensured that the respondents' rights to privacy, anonymity as well as confidentiality were not violated by requesting permission from them to use information gathered in the final research report, but not making their identities and unwanted information known. A coding system to compare pre- and post-tests in the form of anonymous questionnaires aided aspects of both anonymity and confidentiality.

3.2.6.4 Debriefing of respondents

Debriefing involves giving respondents an opportunity, after the study, to work through experiences and rectify any misconceptions, as well as allowing for questions as it should be a learning experience for both researcher and respondents (Strydom, 2011:122).

The Emotional Awareness Programme implemented essentially aimed at empowering the child respondent to be more aware of his or her own emotions and the emotions of others. The envisioned outcome of the Emotional Awareness Programme was for the child respondent to have a greater understanding of his or her actions according to emotions involved and to "obtain skills for positive channelling of their emotional

experiences” (Knoetze, 2012:186). The author and developer of the programme believe that this outcome has a limited risk of harm and there is no need for the debriefing of respondents (Knoetze, 2012:186). The researcher, while in agreement with this statement, nevertheless provided the learners with a debriefing session after data had been collected.

3.2.6.5 Publication of the findings

The reading public should be introduced to the findings of a research study in the form of writing which is clear, unambiguous, unbiased and contains all the relevant information (Strydom, 2011:126).

The researcher has presented the findings of the study in the form of this written research report, which has been supervised and will be available to the broader public. A verbal and this written report on the research findings will once examined also be disseminated to the relevant educators directly and indirectly involved in the study as well as the headmaster of the school. This report does not contain identifying information of the school which granted permission to conduct the study, the educator as well as the respondents.

3.2.6.6 Denial of treatment

Concern regarding the denial of treatment of respondents is addressed by the NASW’s Code of Ethics according to which it is believed that suitable measures should be taken to ensure that all respondents have access to some sort of service (Marlow, 2005:105). For the purpose of this study, the researcher provided the comparison group with the opportunity to be exposed to and engage in the same Emotional Awareness Programme as the experimental group, after finalisation of the study.

3.2.6.7 Actions and competence of researcher

The onus is on the researchers of proposed studies to ensure that they are skilled, honest and competent to embark on the envisaged expedition (Walliman, 2006:148). This requirement, according to Stydom (2011:123), has even greater importance when

the study involves sensitive issues. The study involved emotions, although in a positive sense, and was dealt with in a sensitive manner as a result of the context of the study.

The researcher, being a social worker, having been trained and having been exposed to working with children and matters arising from their often traumatic life experiences, has the necessary understanding and competence to undertake this study. The educator exposed to and experienced in working within the educational setting, was also additionally trained by the researcher with regard to the Emotional Awareness Programme as well as the middle childhood developmental phase. These aspects thus increase the credibility of both the researcher and the educator who can be regarded as co-researcher with regard to the investigation.

The researcher selected the school purely on the basis of availability as well as the positive attitude and enthusiasm of the headmaster and staff. The researcher does not form part of the school and had never been in contact with the school before approaching them to conduct the research. The researcher therefore had no conflict of interest in this regard.

3.3 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The empirical results of the data collected during this study are presented in two sub-sections, namely section A which focuses on the biographical profile of respondents and section B which focuses on a discussion on the development of emotional vocabulary and levels of emotional awareness. Section A is discussed in the following sub-section.

3.3.1 Section A: Biographical profile of respondents

The biological profile of the respondents will be described according to the following variables:

- Age and developmental phase
- Gender
- Language

3.3.1.1 Age and developmental phase of respondents

Grade three learners were selected to be part of both the experimental and comparison group. The ages ranged from nine to ten years old during the period between pre-and post-test. This age range falls under the middle childhood (ages six to eleven) phase of development which is characterised by developing brains, self-control and speech/language, allowing for them to become skilled at reading, writing, science, maths and other school subjects (Woolfolk & Perry, 2014:6-7). They also start to form and discard friendships, play games, sport and show an understanding of abstract terms. Grade three learners have well developed fine motor skills during this stage of development and are in a better position to express themselves through writing than their grade two and grade one counterparts (Charlesworth, Wood & Viggiani, 2011:183). These writing and reading skills therefore allowed for each of the respondents to participate in the Emotional Awareness Programme from pre-test to post-test stages as it requires completing the questionnaires through writing. Figure 3.1 that follows displays the age distribution among the respondents of the study.

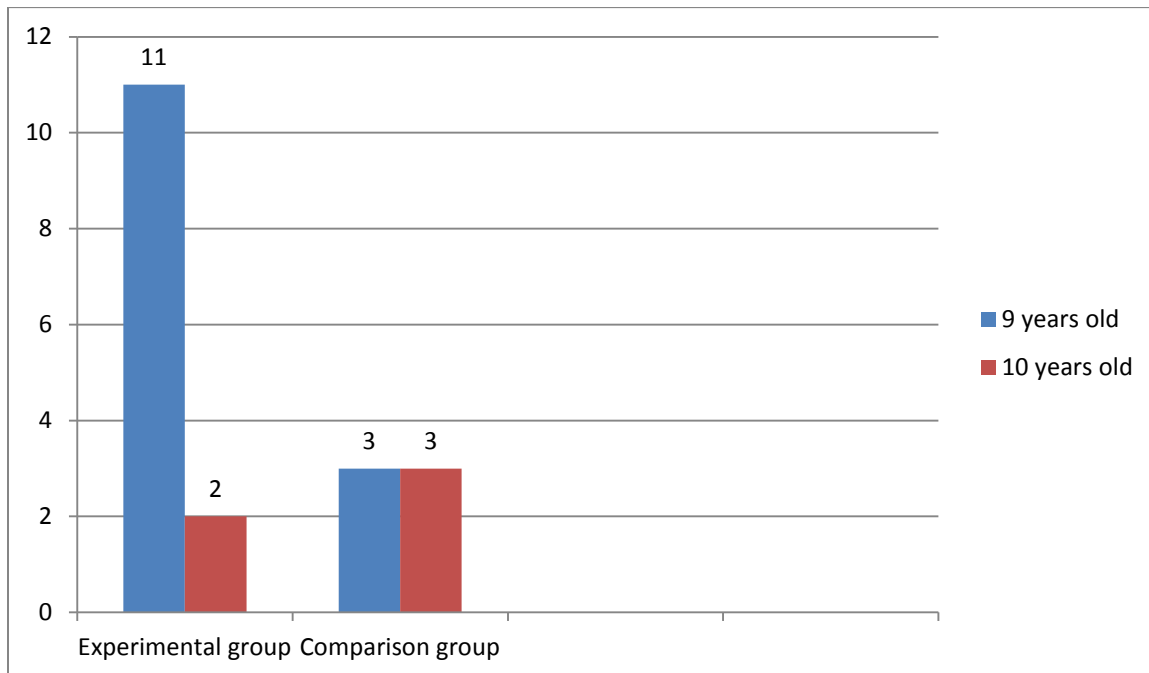


Figure 3.1: Age composition of respondents

3.3.1.2 Gender

The experimental group consisted of 13 respondents who completed both the pre-test and the post-test and six respondents in the comparison group who completed both the pre-test and the post-test. The experimental group consisted of five males and eight females while the comparison group had a balance between male and females, namely three of each gender. In total 19 respondents were part of the study as these respondents completed both the pre-test and post-test instead of the sampled 23 respondents. Figure 3.2 that follows provides a graphic presentation of the gender composition of respondents.

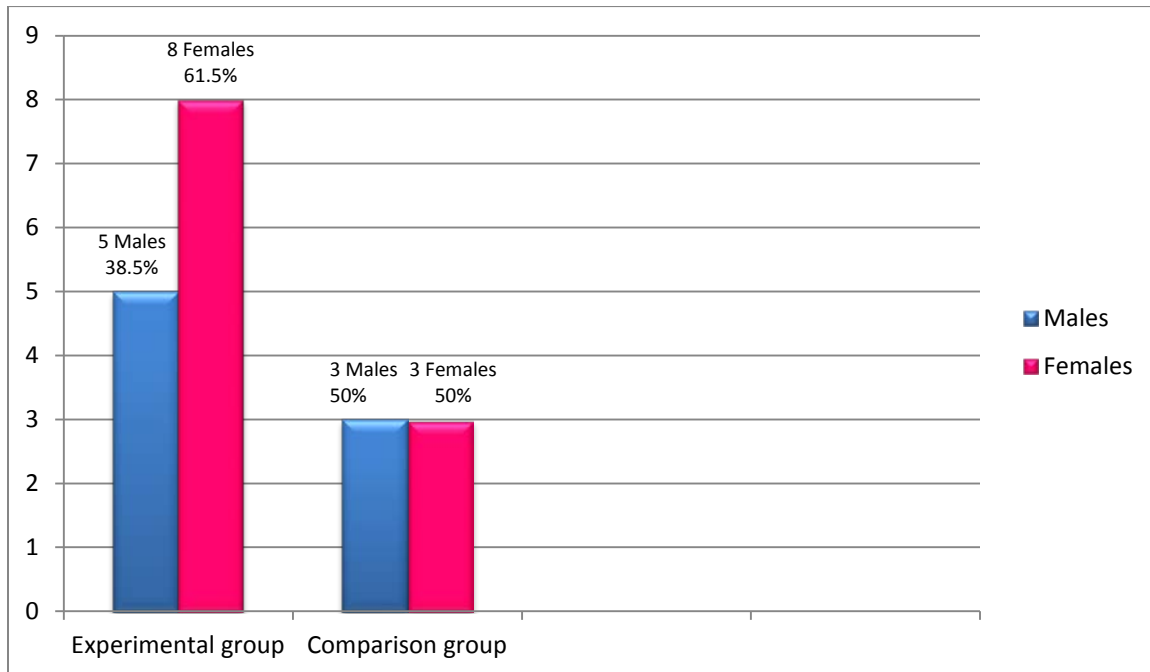


Figure 3.2: Gender composition of respondents

3.3.1.3 Language

The language of learning for the experimental group was English while the comparison group had Afrikaans as language of instruction. The respondents were from a private primary school in Hartbeespoort which has one English grade three class and one Afrikaans grade three class. The decision on which class would be the experimental group was done through simple random sampling as the questionnaire (LEAS-C) is

available in both English and Afrikaans. By utilising simple random sampling the experimental group was the English grade three class and the comparison group the Afrikaans grade three class. All the respondents (100 per cent) of the experimental group were English-speaking learners, and 100 per cent of the respondents in the comparison group were Afrikaans-speaking learners.

3.3.2 Section B: Empirical findings

The main focus of this section on empirical findings is on the empirical data collected with the Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale for Children (LEAS-C) as the standardised measuring instrument designed by Lane and Bajgar (2003).

The researcher had the Emotional Awareness Programme implemented within the educational setting as part of the grade three curriculum with the aim of establishing the following:

- Whether a higher level of emotional language could be acquired by the experimental group as compared to the comparison group as well as the degree to which this increase, if any, can be used for the expression of emotions; and
- How exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme affected the emotional awareness of the respondents.

The section on empirical findings is thus presented according to the following two sub-sections:

- Sub-section 1: Development of emotional vocabulary
- Sub-section 2: Levels of emotional awareness

3.3.2.1 Sub-section 1: Development of Emotional Vocabulary

The seven week Emotional Awareness Programme developed by Knoetze (2012) was based on her observations in previous studies (Knoetze, 2006), namely that there was a great need for the development of the emotional awareness of children. The Emotional Awareness Programme therefore aims at enhancing not only the emotional awareness

of children specifically in the middle childhood developmental phase but also at expanding these children's emotional vocabulary as well as working towards heightened abilities in emotional expression (Knoetze, 2012:191). The emotional vocabulary was thus measured as an important component of this study.

Emotional vocabulary could be seen in the emotional awareness levels of respondents measured from the weight or value attached to the emotion words in the glossary of words which forms part of the LEAS-C as a measuring instrument (see Appendix E). Assessing the complexity of emotional awareness involves a range of levels from level zero to level five where levels zero to three can be taken from the glossary list while levels four and five stem from complex emotions from respondents. Calculating and comparing the number of these emotion words of the experimental and comparison groups in both pre- and post-tests paves the way to an understanding as to whether participation in the Emotional Awareness Programme has led to an increase in emotional awareness, emotional vocabulary as well as emotional expression of respondents.

The number of emotional words of respondents categorised into the different levels of Lane and Bajgar's (2003) glossary of words to score the LEAS-C forms the basis of the discussion in the sub-section 1 of the empirical findings. In sub-section 1, the researcher focuses on the frequency of the emotion word responses according to the LEAS-C levels of emotional value as well as a discussion on the utilisation of strong and weak emotion words by respondents.

3.3.2.1.1 Frequency of Emotion word responses according to LEAS-C levels of emotional value

The emotion words as responses by the respondents according to levels zero to five of the LEAS-C glossary of words are indicated in the graphs below. The frequency of responses on each level from zero (low emotional worth) to five (very high emotional worth) is discussed accordingly:

Level zero

Although this level of responses does not have any scoring implication, Knoetze (2012:192) states that it still provides the reader with a broad and inclusive picture of the responses obtained during the pre- and post-test. Level zero responses are scored when the response reveals cognition or when no response is given at all. An example would be “I would feel like she did it deliberately” (Bajgar & Lane, n.d: 5). Figure 3.3 that follows indicates the frequency of level zero emotion word responses.

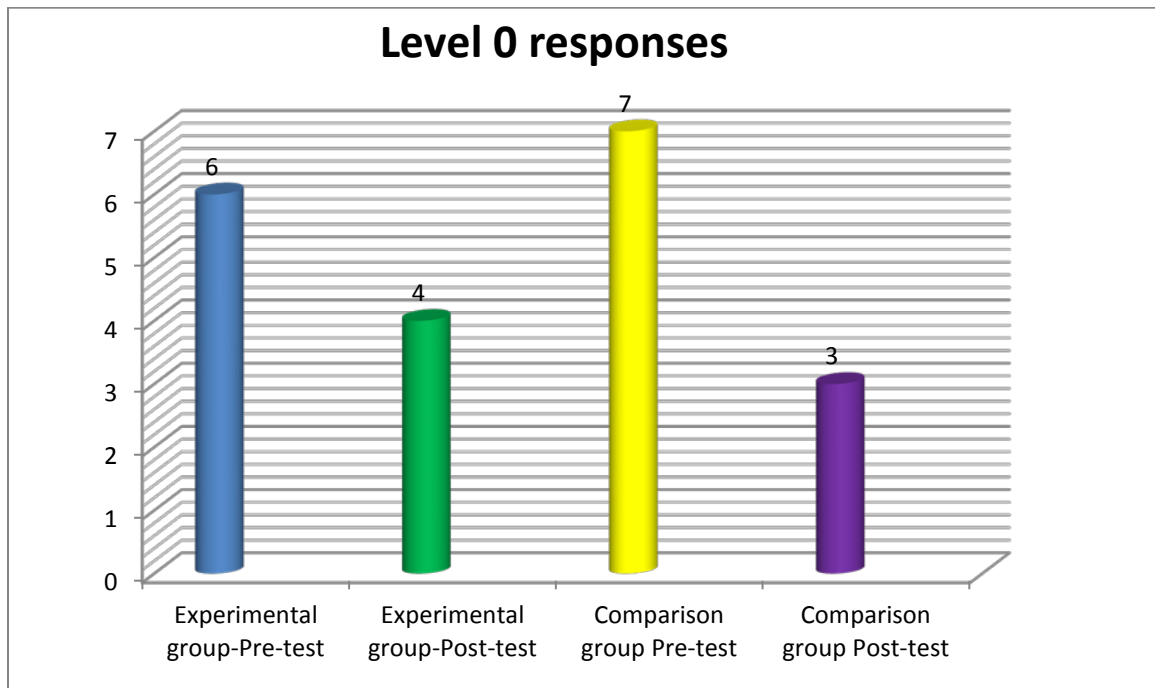


Figure 3.3: Frequency of level zero emotion word responses

Figure 3.3 indicates a decrease in level zero emotion word responses in the pre- and post-tests for both groups. The results indicated that the experimental group had a decrease from six (6) level zero responses in the pre-test to four (4) responses in the post-test and the comparison group had a decrease from seven (7) responses in pre-test to three (3) in the post-test . There was thus a decrease of two (2) responses in the experimental group and a decrease of four (4) in the comparison group. This decrease could be attributed to the respondents having more emotion-laden responses and less

cognitive-based responses during the post-test as a result of the exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme for the experimental group.

Level one

A level one response gives an indication of a low awareness level response and possibly will stress somatic features, such as “I would feel sick”, or may indicate a lack of emotional response, e.g., “I would feel nothing” (Bajgar & Lane, n.d: 5). This level can also further state a body sensation or physical feeling (Lane, 1991:5). Figure 3.4 that follows shows level one emotion word responses.

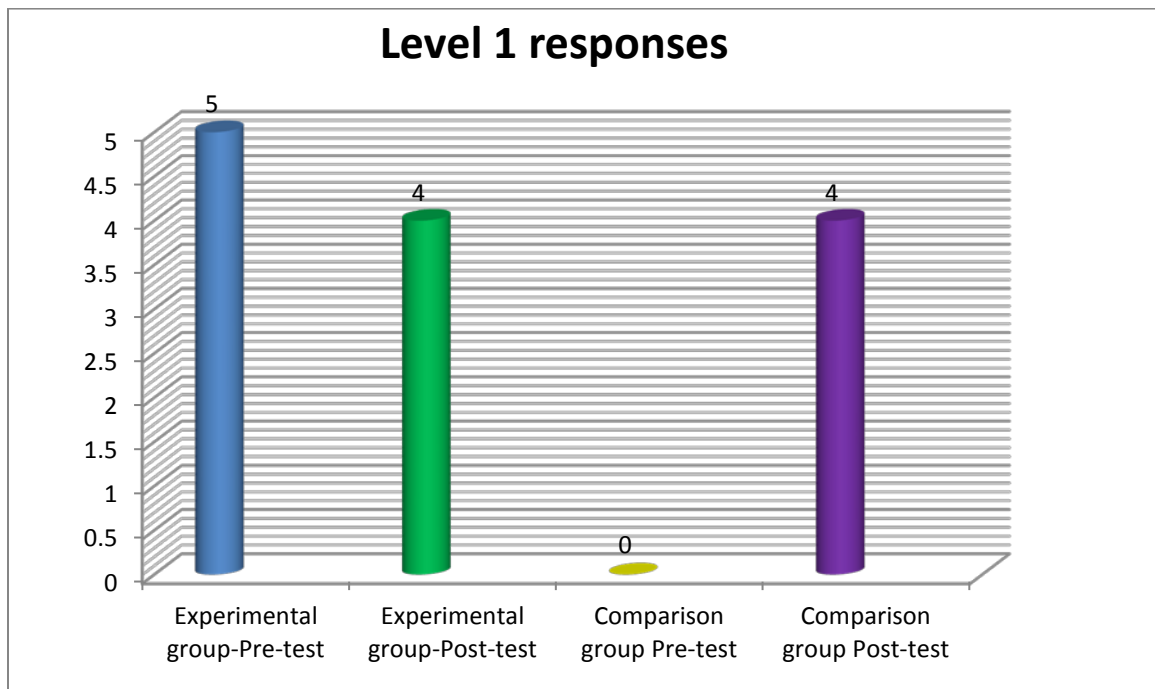


Figure 3.4: Frequency of level one emotion word responses

Figure 3.4 indicates a decrease of one (1) in the number of level one emotion word responses for the experimental group with the pre-test having five (5) and the post-test indicating a response of four (4). The comparison group, however, showed an increase of four (4) level one responses from no (zero) responses in the pre-test to four (4) in the post-test. This could be an indication of the comparison group responding with low value emotion words since they have not been exposed to the Emotional Awareness Programme.

Level two

Level two responses may be a reflection of action e.g., “I would feel like smashing the wall” or a generalised response such as “I would feel good” (Bajgar & Lane, n.d: 6). The results of the level two emotion word responses are indicated in Figure 3.5 that follows.

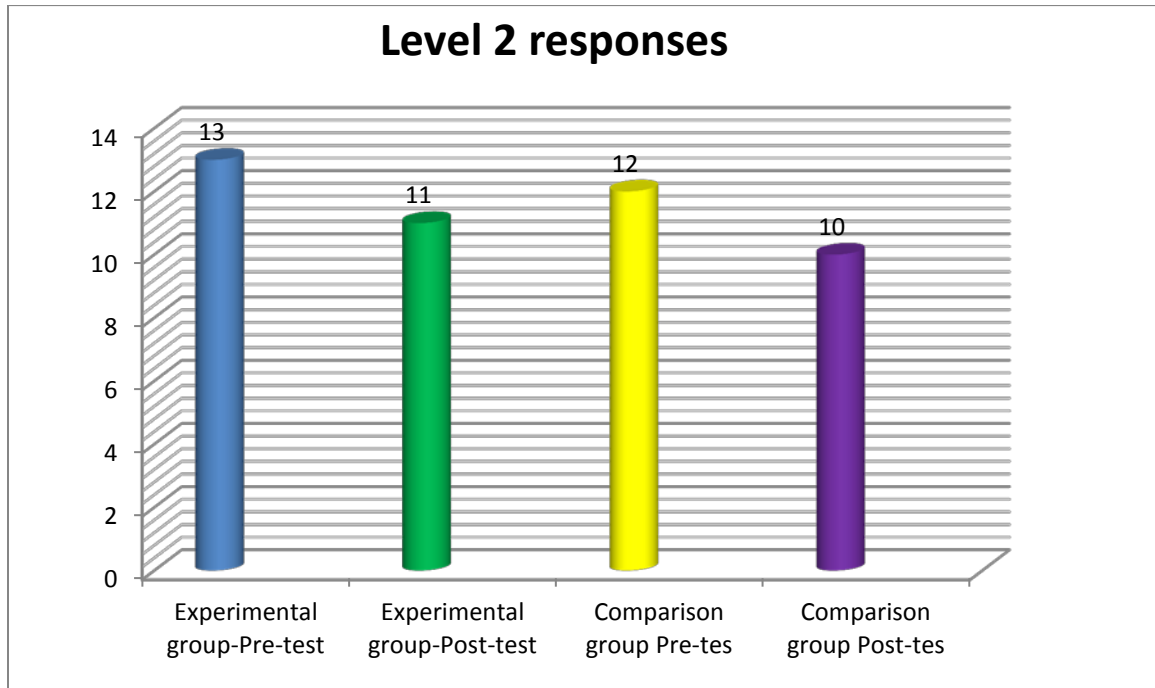


Figure 3.5: Frequency of level two emotion word responses

A slight decrease in level two responses was seen in the results of both the experimental and comparison group. The experimental group had 13 level two responses in the pre-test while the comparison group had 12 responses. The experimental group in its post-test decreased by two (2) from 13 to 11 responses while the comparison group also decreased by two (2) from 12 to 10 responses in the post-test. The change in responses from both groups was not major but still gives an indication of the possibility of higher emotion value words (i.e. levels 3-5) used in post-tests.

Level three

It is stated that level three emotion word responses reflect *undimensional emotions* such as “I would feel sad” (Lane & Bajgar, n.d:6). These responses are also seen in words which suggest an exchange of emotions (sympathise, empathise) as well as words which are closely allied to specific emotions such as *look forward, let down* and *dying for*. Level three responses therefore have a greater emotional value than levels zero to two although emotions are still used in isolation without combinations of emotions (Knoetze, 2012:194). The results of level three emotion word responses are reflected in the following Figure 3.6.

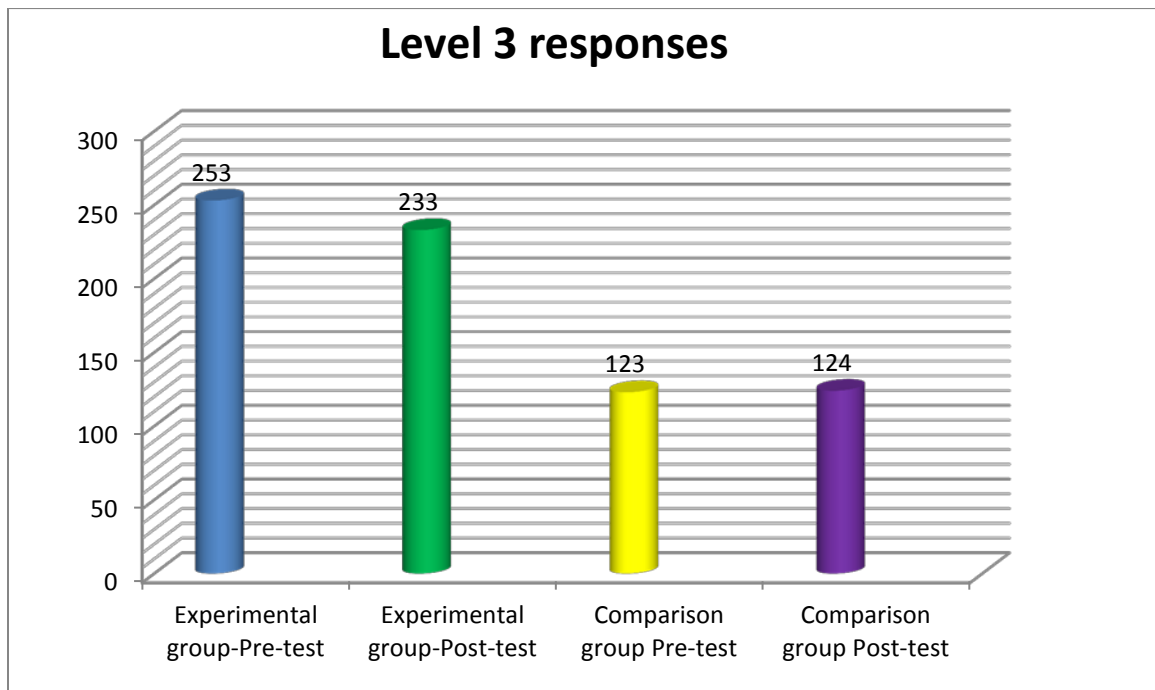


Figure 3.6: Frequency of level three emotion word responses

As indicated in Figure 3.6 above, the level three responses in the pre-test show that the number of responses of the experimental group (253) is more than half that of the comparison group which is 123 i.e. the experimental group has 130 more level three responses than the comparison group in the pre-test. The post-test indicates results of 233 for the experimental group and 124 for the comparison group. There is therefore a decrease of 20 responses in the experimental group and an increase of one (1)

response in the comparison group. The results show significantly greater amounts of level three responses compared to the preceding levels (zero-two). The slight increase of one response of the comparison group may be indicative of no change having taken place during the seven-week period while the experimental group was exposed to the Emotional Awareness Programme, hence the 20 response decrease for the experimental group. It possibly shows greater utilisation of advanced level four and level five words being used by the experimental group.

Level four

“Level four and five emotion word responses reflect greater complexity in awareness with emotion blends evident e.g., I would feel angry but maybe a little bit sad as well” (Lane & Bajgar, n.d, 6). A level four response arises when two or more level three emotions are distinguishable from each other, opposing emotions are described and when “different reasons are given for a single emotional response, e.g. I would feel angry with myself and angry with my neighbour” (Lane, 1991:8). Figure 3.7 that follows displays the level four emotion word responses.

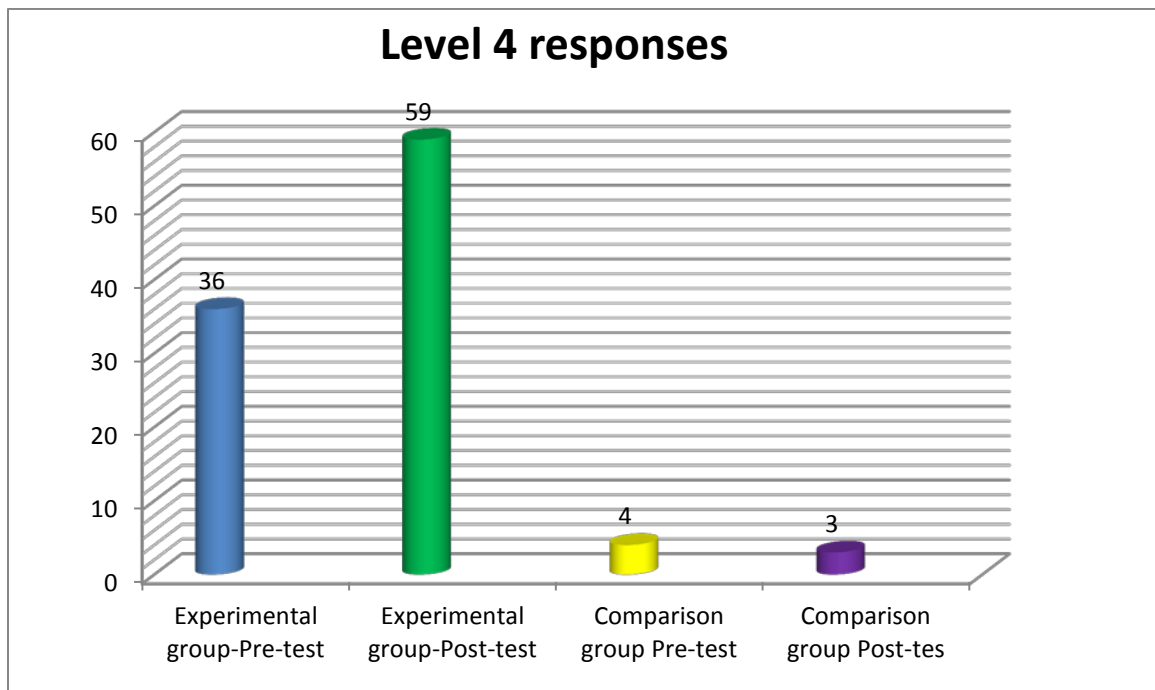


Figure 3.7: Frequency of level four emotion word responses

Figure 3.7 highlights the increase of level four responses of the experimental group from 36 in the pre-test to 59 in the post-test and the decrease of level four responses of the comparison group from four (4) to three (3) level four responses. This shows an increase in the number of blends and combinations of emotion words used by the respondents of the experimental group after being exposed to the Emotional Awareness Programme. The results therefore indicate heightened levels of emotional awareness and emotional expression in the experimental group.

Level five

Achieving a level five score indicates a high level of emotional awareness and emotional expression as a result of the use of emotional blends and combinations when responding to scenarios for both 'self' and 'others'. i.e. a level four score for the 'self' and level four score for 'other' will give a 'total' score of a level five. Figure 3.8 provides an illustration of the level five responses obtained by in the study.

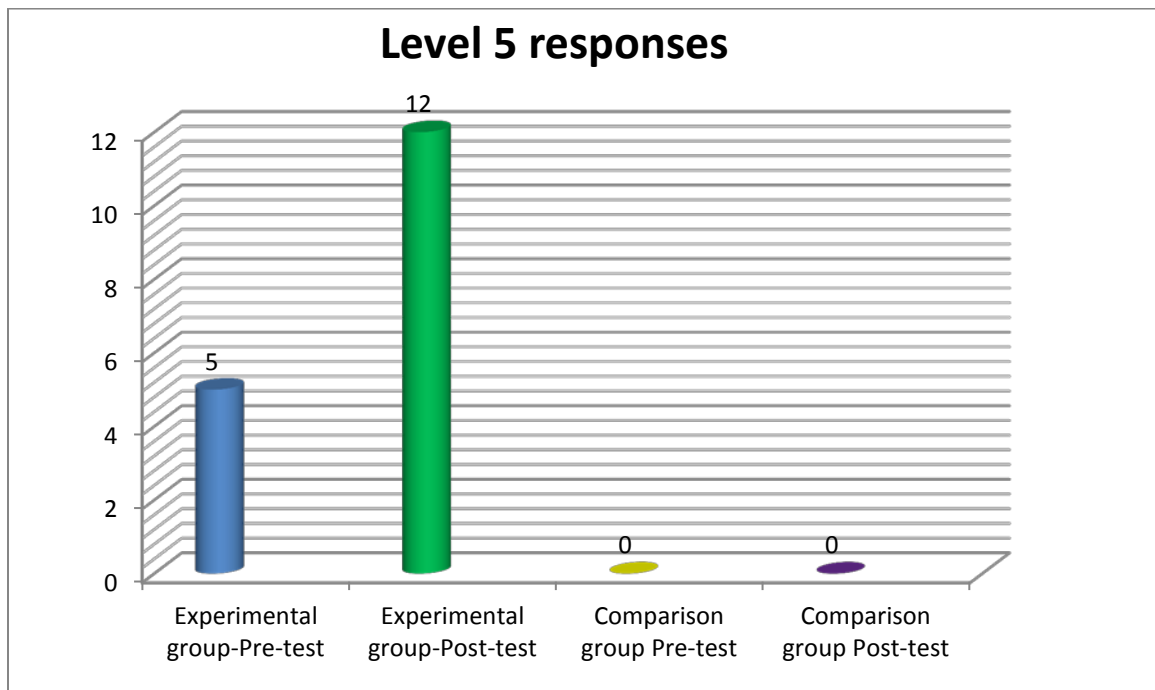


Figure 3.8: Frequency of level five emotion word responses

It is quite clear that the zero level five responses in both pre-test and post-test of the comparison group shows no difference or change in the utilisation of level five

responses. The increase from five (5) to twelve (12) level five responses shows the success of the Emotional Awareness Programme in developing and enhancing the emotional awareness, emotional expression and emotional vocabulary of the experimental group. The lack of level five responses in the comparison group shows that there was no development in any of the abovementioned areas.

3.3.2.1.2 Summary of emotion word response frequency

A synopsis of the responses gathered during the pre-tests and post-tests of both experimental and comparison groups allows for the reader to have an overview of the quality (levels) of emotional responses. This allows for easier comparison between the experimental and comparison group. Figure 3.9 that follows provides a summary of emotion word response frequencies of both the experimental and comparison groups.

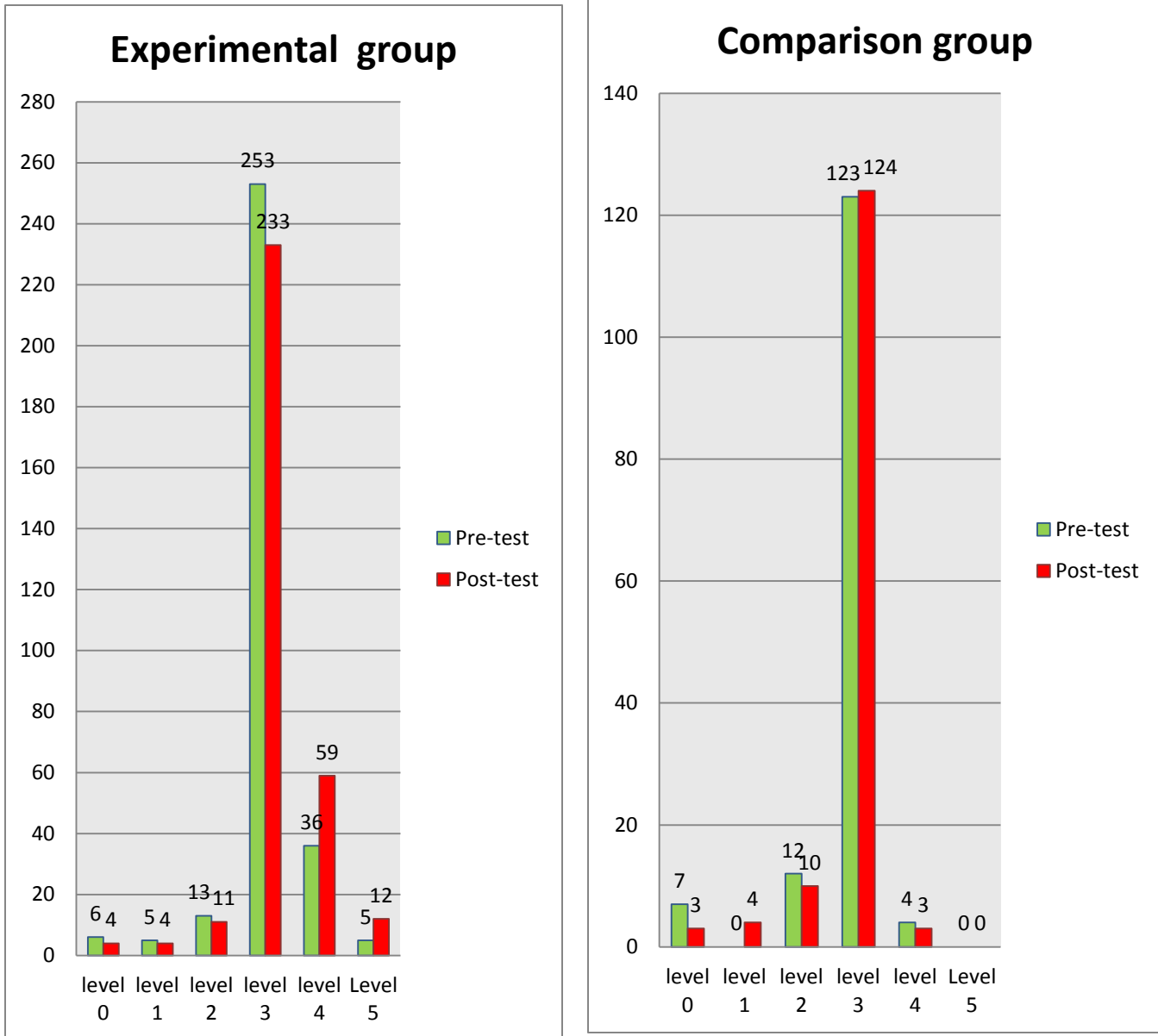


Figure 3.9: Comparison of emotion word response frequencies between experimental and comparison group

Figure 3.9 reveals that the responses for level zero and level one were quite low, with the pre-tests and post-tests showing responses below ten (10) for both experimental and comparison groups. The responses did not increase much for level two responses in both experimental and comparison group. This being said, a decrease from pre-test to post-test for each of the three levels (0 to 2) in both experimental and comparison groups is seen. Level three responses, however, showed greater emotional word

responses with a slight decrease of pre-test (253) to post-test (233) of the experimental group and an increase on one (1) in the comparison group. An increase in level four words from 36 in the pre-test to 59 in the post-test shows the experimental group's increased ability to make use of combinations and blends of emotions representing increased emotional awareness, emotional vocabulary and emotional expression. It also provides an explanation for the decrease in the level three responses of the experimental group.

The low level four responses for the comparison group (pre-test four (4), post-test three (3) show a lack of development with regard to emotional awareness, emotional vocabulary and emotional expression. The zero scoring for level five for the comparison group confirms this lack of development in terms of the goals of the Emotional Awareness Programme, namely emotional awareness, emotional vocabulary and emotional expression. An increase in the level five responses for the experimental group from five (5) in the pre-test to a number more than double, namely twelve (12) in the post-test yet again shows the development of emotional awareness and its accompanying elements.

3.3.2.1.3. Strong and weak emotion words

A comparison between what Knoetze (2012:200) refers to as strong emotion words (strong emotional impact) and weak emotion words (ordinary emotion words) in the pre-test and post-test of both experimental and comparison groups was also done as part of the study. This comparison of words such as *agony, worried, distressed, deceived, disappointed, furious, excited, jealous, nervous, pity, shy, shocked* and *surprise* (strong words) and *better, good, bad, glad* and *sad* (weak words) gives way to an understanding as to whether the Emotional Awareness Programme has contributed to an increase of emotional awareness (Knoetze, 2012:200). Knoetze (2012:201) highlights that weak emotion words are used in everyday language while strong emotion words carry more value in terms of emotional meaning attached to them.

Results from the comparison indicating an increase in weak words show that there is a lack of strong language and subsequently of emotional awareness development. An

increase in strong emotion words or a decrease in weak emotion words from pre-test to post-test indicates that the respondents have gained the ability for better emotional expression, increased emotional awareness as well as emotional vocabulary. Figure 3.10 that follows displays the weak emotion word responses of the experimental group.

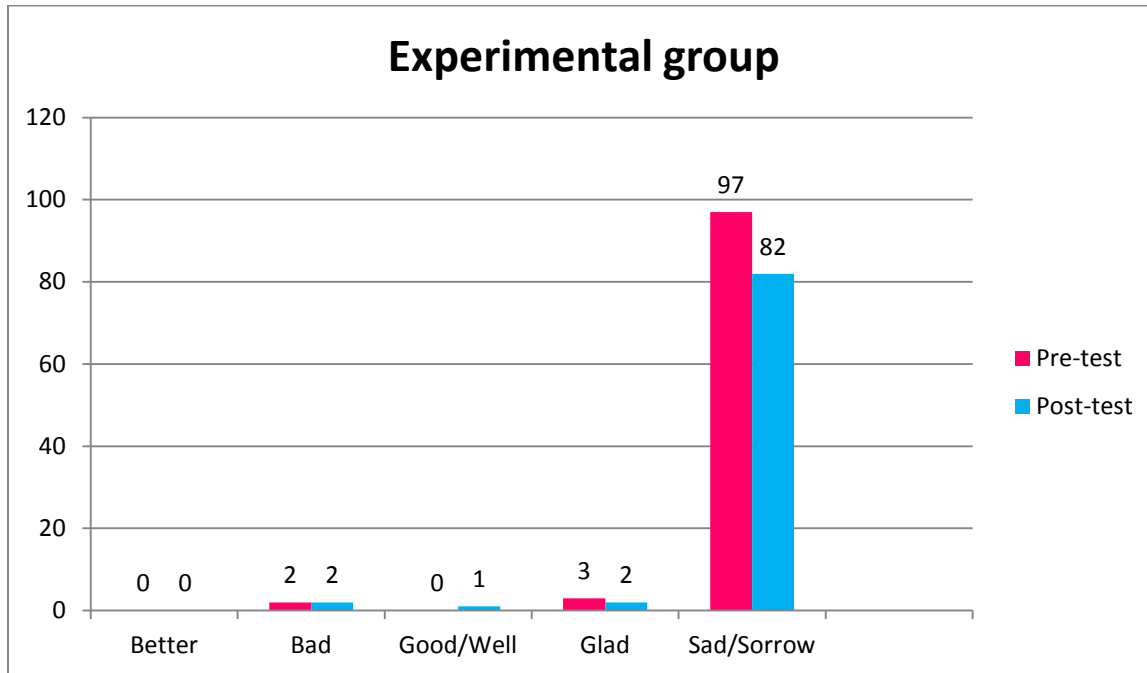


Figure 3.10: Weak emotion words utilisation by experimental group

Figure 3.10 represents the weak emotion words utilised by the experimental group. The word *better* was not used in either pre- or post-test of the experimental group while *good* showed an increase of one (1). The word *bad* shows no change from pre-test (2) to post-test (2) Words *glad* and *sad* both showed a decrease from pre- (3 and 97 respectively) to post-test (2 and 82 respectively), indicating a possible increase in the use of stronger words.

However, in Figure 3.11 the comparison group also shows a decrease in the use of the words *sad* and *bad* from 47 to 33 and 3 to 0 respectively. There is only an increase in the use of the word *glad* (11-23). The words *better* and *good* were not utilised during either pre- and post-tests as seen in Figure 3.11 that follows.

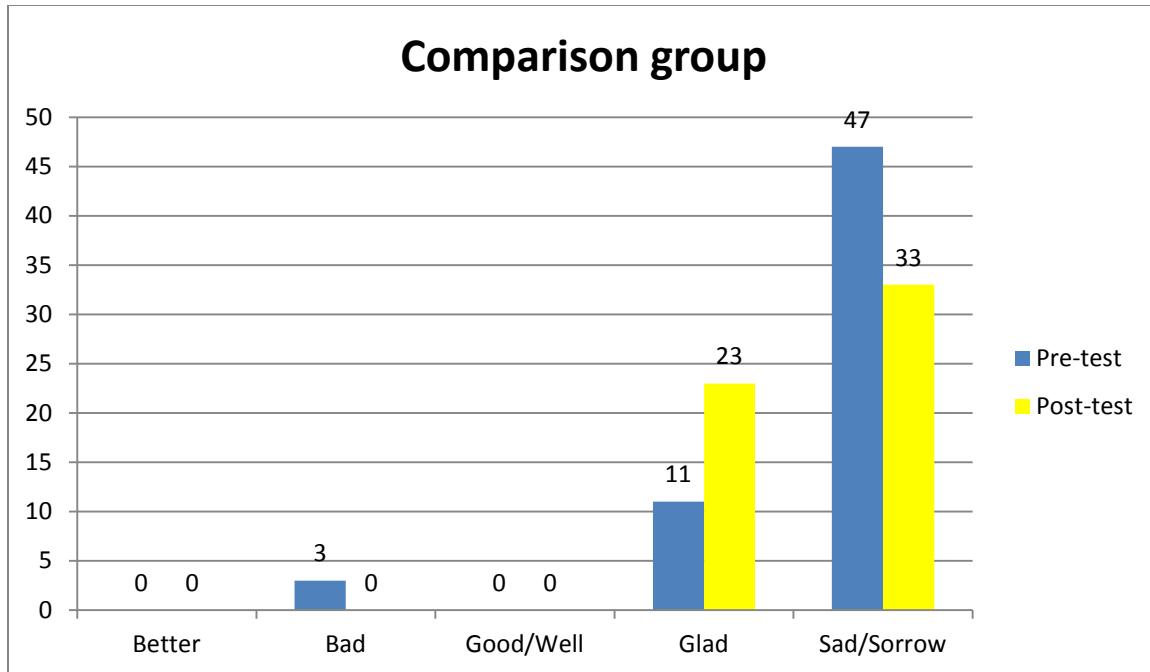


Figure 3.11: Weak emotion words utilisation by comparison group

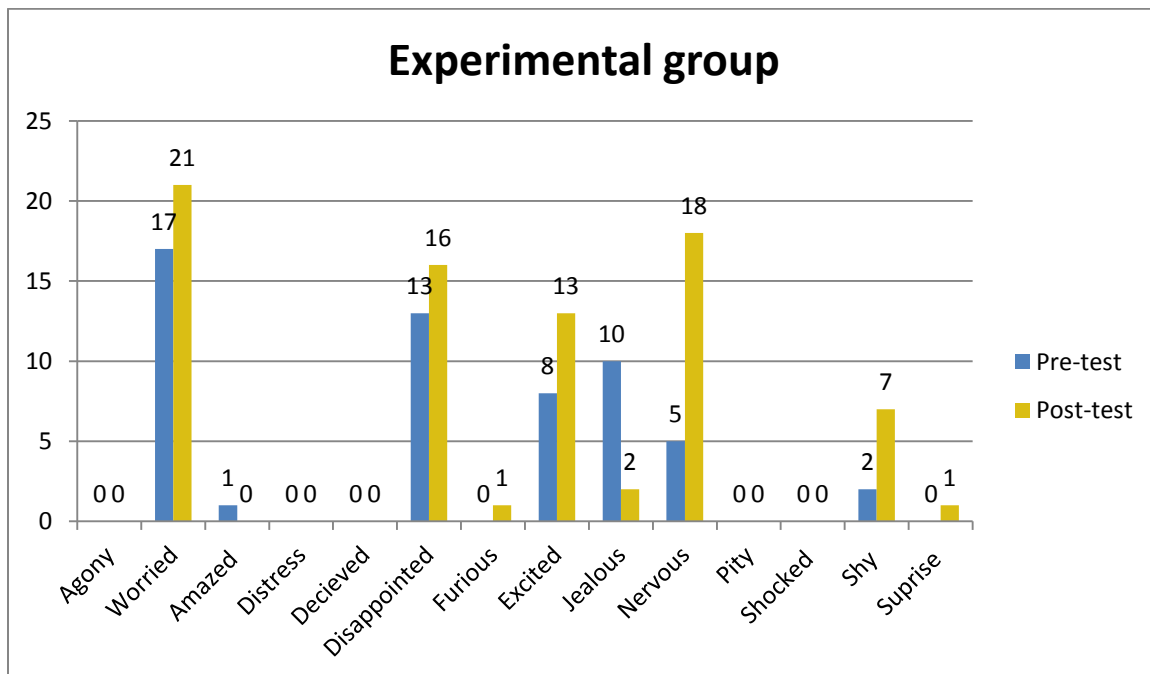


Figure 3.12: Strong emotion words utilisation by experimental group

Figure 3.12 shows the comparison of the utilisation of *strong* words in the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group. Increases in strong words *worried*, *disappointed*, *furious*, *excited*, *nervous*, *shy* and *surprised* were seen in the post-test while there was a decrease in the use of *strong* words such as *amazed* and *jealous*. *Strong* words such as *agony*, *distressed*, *deceived*, *pity* and *shocked* were not utilised by the experimental group in the post-test. The increase in the *strong* words gives an indication that the Emotional Awareness Programme to which the experimental group has been exposed to has increased the respondents' ability with regard to emotional vocabulary, emotional expression and ultimately emotional awareness. Figure 3.13 displays the strong emotion words utilised by the comparison group.

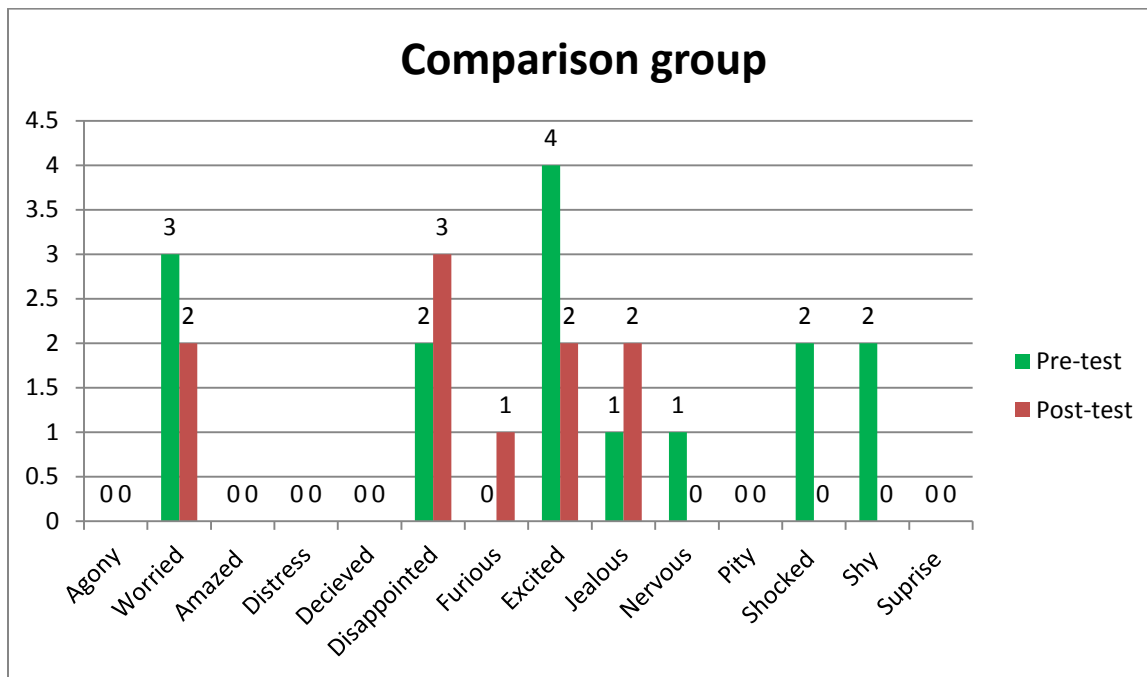


Figure 3.13: Strong emotion words utilisation by comparison group

Figure 3.13 indicates that there has only been an increase in three (3) *strong* words, namely *disappointed* (2-3), *furious* (0-1) and *jealous* (1-2). *Worried*, *excited*, *nervous*, *shocked* and *shy* all decreased with *agony*, *amazed*, *distress*, *deceived*, *pity* and *surprise* not utilised by the respondents in the post-test. These results show the inability of the respondents from the comparison group to utilise strong emotional words. Comparing the results between the strong word utilisation in figure 3.12 and figure 3.13

indicates that the experimental group showed an increased ability to use strong words which further gives an indication of the goal of increased emotional awareness, emotional expression and vocabulary possibly due to exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme.

The sub-section 2 provides a holistic overview of the level of emotional awareness of both experimental and comparison groups as well as the impact of the Emotional Awareness Programme on the respondents' emotional awareness abilities.

3.3.2.1 Sub-section 2: Emotional Awareness Levels

The total scores for emotion word responses gathered from the twelve scenarios in the LEAS-C questionnaire for each individual in the experimental and comparison groups have been combined. This allows for a view of the groups' level of emotional awareness in totality i.e. either experimental or comparison group. This overview is seen in Figure 3.14 and Figure 3.15 presentations below of both experimental and comparison groups respectively.

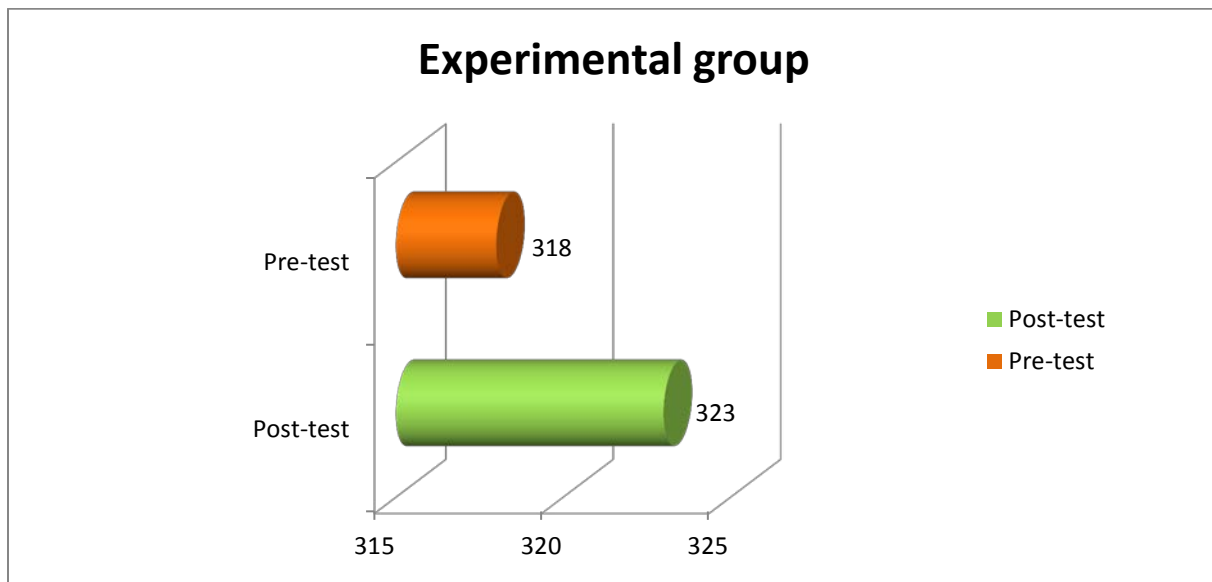


Figure 3.14: Total scores of emotion word responses in experimental group

Figure 3.14 illustrates the total emotion word responses used in terms of levels (0-5) as guided by the standardised questionnaire for measuring emotional awareness (LEAS-C)

for the experimental group. The total points achieved by the experimental group in the pre-test was 318 points with a 5-point increase to 323 in the post-test.

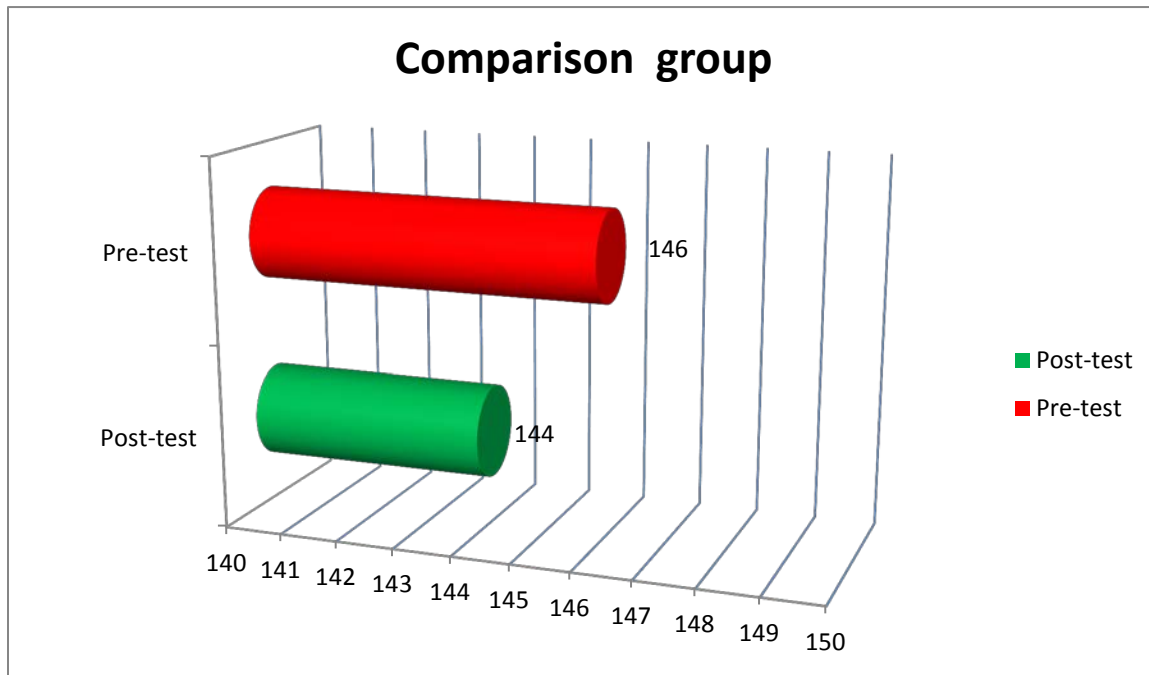


Figure 3.15: Total scores of emotion word responses in comparison group

Figure 3.15 provides an overview of the total points achieved by the comparison group for both pre- and post-tests. The total points achieved in the post-test was 144 indicating a decrease of two (2) points from the 146 achieved in the pre-test. This decrease, although not major, gives an indication that not much has changed in terms of emotional awareness and emotional vocabulary between pre-test and post-test for the comparison group.

Knoetze (2012:207) suggests that the difference in points between pre-and post-test can also be illustrated in terms of percentages instead of points as the number of respondents representing the experimental group respondents (13) and the comparison group respondents (6) groups differs. The percentages were calculated by taking the difference between pre- and post-test and dividing it by the total number of the points in the pre-test of each group. It is through this exercise and illustration that a comparable evaluation of the increase and decrease of both experimental and comparison groups could be made.

Figure 3.16 below therefore shows a 1.6 per cent increase of emotional awareness for the experimental group and a 1.4 per cent decrease of emotional awareness for the comparison group between pre-tests and post-tests results. This suggests that the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme might have had an effect on the development of emotional awareness of the respondents from the experimental group.

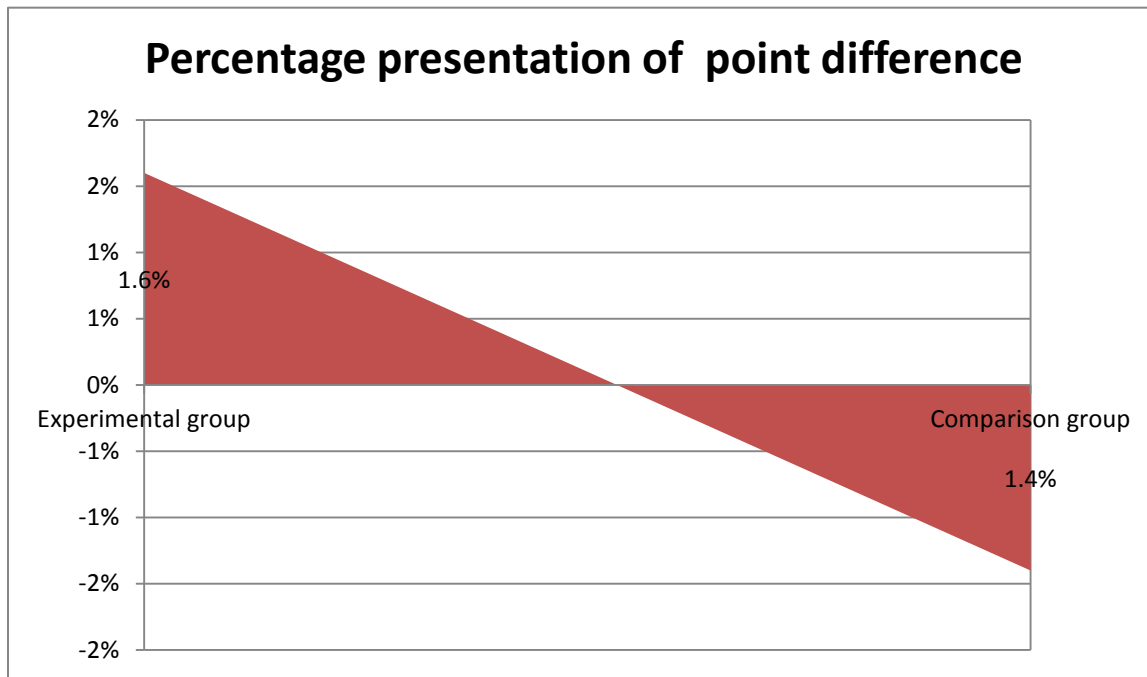


Figure 3.16: Percentage representation of emotional awareness for experimental and comparison groups

3.4 DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The study's main focus was to evaluate the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme with children in the middle childhood development phase within an educational setting. The study hypothesised that if an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, then the level of emotional functioning of the learners will be enhanced (main hypothesis). The study was also further based on three sub-hypotheses which are important in the discussion of the empirical results in this section. The sub-hypotheses are as follows:

Sub-hypotheses

- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to be **in contact with their emotions** will be enhanced.
- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to **discriminate between different emotions** will increase.
- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, they will gain the ability to **verbalise and 'own'** their emotions.

Whether the empirical results supported these hypotheses or not lies in arguing certain topics, namely the development of emotional expression, the development of emotional vocabulary, the development of emotional awareness levels and the general success of the Emotional Awareness programme within the educational system (Knoetze, 2012:212).

Emotional expression and vocabulary

Emotional expression has a multi-dimensional nature and emotional awareness plays a vital role in this process. Having said that, the development of emotional awareness in child development is therefore clearly significant (Strayer & Roberts, 2004:4). Emotional expression is further described as a phase of the Gestalt play therapy process which provides a description of emotional expression as first having to know what emotions are, the different kinds of emotions and the body's reaction to various emotions (Blom, 2006:137). This awareness of bodily reactions to specific emotions can act as a guideline to children becoming more aware of their emotions (Blom, 2006:138).

The empirical results with regard to emotional expression indicate there was an increase in the use of emotional blends from pre-test to post-test as seen in the levels four and five response increases. The decrease in responses from pre-test to post-test

in levels zero to level three leads to the assumption that the experimental group's being exposed to the Emotional Awareness Programme has led to heightened abilities of emotional expression. The zero level five responses in the pre-test and post-test of the comparison group also show that emotional expression was not developed in the comparison group as they were not exposed to the Emotional Awareness Programme.

Strong (high emotional value and complexity) and *weak* (everyday words) emotion words utilised by the experimental and comparison groups were also compared in order to determine the emotional vocabulary development of respondents. Emotional vocabulary development corresponds with children's language development around the age of 18 months and keeps on increasing in complexity from thereon (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2002). Gergely and Watson, 1996 in Factor, Rosen and Reyes (2013:5) highlight that children learn through observing and copying what their caregivers do and how they label and display emotions and through this process they develop emotional awareness and the ability to express it in other situations with other people. The empirical results indicate a decrease in *weak words* and an increase in the use of *strong words* by the experimental group. The comparison group not only showed a decrease in the use of *strong words* but also that fewer *strong words* were used compared to the experimental group. This thus provides evidence that a higher level of emotional vocabulary development was gained by the experimental group due to the exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme.

The findings prove all three of the sub-hypotheses but more so in the case of sub-hypothesis two and three as the implementation of the Emotional Awareness Programme for children in middle childhood within the education setting did in fact enhance their ability to discriminate between different emotions (2) and their ability to verbalise and 'own' their emotions (3).

Emotional awareness

Rieffe et al. (2008:757) refer to emotional awareness as the process whereby a person attends to, identifies, differentiates between, and evaluates his or her own emotions. This identification, differentiation and evaluation give rise to the various activities in

which the respondents were involved during the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme as well as the LEAS-C questionnaire which enhanced and tested their level of emotional awareness. The level of emotional awareness of each of the respondents was evident in their ability to interpret and experience emotions accurately based on the contextual cues (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dusnmore, 2001:80). The authors further add that when respondents display accurate emotional awareness, engagement in effective emotional regulation and emotional expression is possible. A lack of or insufficient emotional awareness on the other hand might lead to imprecise interpretation of emotional cues or situations (such as the 12 scenarios in the LEAS-C), making poor decisions socially and an inability to express themselves emotionally. It can therefore be seen that individual differences with regard to emotional awareness not only exist but that they range quite widely among individuals (Bajgar et al., 2005).

In order to reach this optimal emotional awareness level referred to above, it is important to understand that children's emotional awareness and expressiveness increase through each developmental phase owing to development in their ability to formulate, verbalise and express emotional complexities (Bajgar et al., 2005:571). Emotional awareness development is said to begin at birth, and is a core process as an infant communicates his or her needs to caregivers (Keenan, 2000:420). Keenan (2000) further refers to the act of emotional expression involving the cognitive planning and using of contextual cues in order to express the appropriate mechanisms and emotional messages. Lane and Schwartz (1987) in Lane and McRae (2004:90) highlight this cognitive element of emotional awareness by referring to the five levels of emotional awareness which form the basis of the scoring of this study. The levels of emotional awareness are as follows:

- 1) Awareness of physical sensations
- 2) Action tendencies
- 3) Single emotions
- 4) Blends of emotions

5) Blends of emotional experiences

The empirical results confirm the above mentioned literature as seen in the responses of the respondents from the comparison group being higher than those of the experimental group in the lower value emotional levels (0-1). The comparison group also shows a decrease in level four responses compared to an increase in the experimental group as well as no responses for level five for the comparison group. The comparison group also further showed a 1.4 per cent decrease in emotional awareness in comparison to the 1.6 per cent increase of the experimental group after being exposed to the Emotional Awareness Programme. This substantiates sub-hypothesis one (1) as the respondents not only showed enhanced emotional awareness but also an increase in their ability to be in contact with their emotions.

Success of the Emotional Awareness Programme within the educational system

The information and results gathered and discussed thus far have given an indication of the achievement of the premise of the study i.e. to develop and enhance the emotional functioning of learners in middle childhood in a private setting.

The success of this study within the South African educational system was seen in that emotional awareness can also be taught in the same manner as cognitive aptitude has and is currently being taught. This need for the incorporation of emotional education in the educational system is highlighted by the assertion that children will have greater hope for the future should the education system pay as much attention to emotional wellbeing as they do to academic excellence and physical health (Bosacki, 2008:176). This statement most probably stems from the acknowledgement of the education system in integrating emotional development into its curriculum as seen in the Life Orientation and Life Skills courses (Baker & Badenhorst, 2003:44).

The success (1.6 per cent increase) seen within seven weeks of the implementation of the Emotional Awareness Programme as part of the grade three curriculum could be greater should the elements of the Emotional Awareness Programme be implemented on a long-term basis.

3.5 SUMMARY

The focus of this chapter was on the analysis of the data obtained from the completion of the LEAS-C in pre-and post-test of both the experimental and comparison group. This was followed by the interpretation of this data into graphic and tabular presentation in order to comprehend the results of the analysis.

The development of emotional awareness and the development of emotional vocabulary were the two aspects that the analysis presented. Empirical results indicated that the emotional awareness as well as the emotional vocabulary of the respondents of the experimental group were enhanced after exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme for seven weeks. This was in comparison to the results obtained from the comparison group which showed a decrease in the development of both emotional awareness and emotional vocabulary.

The researcher implemented the Emotional Awareness Programme with the aim of establishing the following:

- Whether a higher level of emotional language could be acquired by the experimental group as compared to the comparison group as well as the degree to which this increase, if any, can be used for the expression of emotions.
- How exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme affected the level of emotional awareness of the respondents.

The response to the above-mentioned is positive as shown in the empirical results discussed in this chapter. The empirical results also further prove the main hypothesis of the study to be true: If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, then the level of emotional functioning of the learners will be enhanced.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this research study rested in the researcher's enthusiasm to evaluate the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme with children in the middle childhood developmental phase. The study did, however, unfold the strong link between emotional intelligence and emotional awareness with specific emphasis on emotional awareness being a prerequisite for the development of emotional intelligence. The research study was guided by the Gestalt perspective and the activities were embedded in Gestalt play therapy techniques.

The significance of this study in terms of emotional awareness of children in the middle childhood developmental phase is seen in how exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme has enhanced the ability of the respondents to be in contact with their emotions, to discriminate between different emotions as well as to verbalise and 'own' their emotions. The purpose of this chapter is to recapitulate the contents of the four chapters of this study and to illustrate the conclusions drawn in order to make recommendations. This chapter also provides an indication as to whether the goal and objectives of the research study have been met.

4.2 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

The goal and objectives which directed the study were the following:

Goal of the study

To evaluate the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme to enhance the level of emotional functioning of children in middle childhood in a private school setting in Hartbeespoort in the North West Province

Objectives of the study

- To conceptualise emotional awareness theoretically with specific emphasis on children in the middle childhood developmental phase within an educational setting.
- To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will enhance the ability of learners in middle childhood to be in **contact with their emotions**.
- To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to **discriminate between different emotions**.
- To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to **verbalise and 'own' their emotions**.
- To draw conclusions about the applicability of the Emotional Awareness Programme in a private school setting.

The research study was conducted with thirteen respondents from the experimental group and six from the comparison group who met the criteria set by the researcher. The study focused on confirming or disconfirming the main and sub-hypotheses which were as follows:

Main hypothesis: If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, then the level of emotional functioning of the learners will be enhanced.

Sub-hypotheses

- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to be **in contact with their emotions** will be enhanced.
- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, their ability to **discriminate between different emotions** will increase.

- If an Emotional Awareness Programme is implemented for children in middle childhood in a private school setting, they will gain the ability to **verbalise and 'own'** their emotions.

The data collected provided the researcher with insight regarding the above-mentioned main and sub-hypotheses as was indicated in chapter three, supported by the literature review in chapter two.

4.3 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The research report consists of four chapters where each of these chapters has a specific focus. A synopsis of each of these chapters is provided as follows:

Chapter one: Chapter one provides background information about the study as well as a general outline of how the research study was conducted in order to confirm or disconfirm the main and sub-hypotheses.

Chapter two: This chapter focuses on a literature review on the concepts of emotion, emotional intelligence and emotional awareness. Emotional awareness was further highlighted by focusing on the levels of emotional awareness and emotional awareness as a cognitive ability. Furthermore, a thorough review of literature was done on the child in the middle childhood developmental phase. Specific reference was also made to the Emotional Awareness Programme as a whole as well as the measuring instrument (LEAS-C) which was used to measure the effectiveness of the Emotional Awareness Programme.

Chapter three: This chapter focuses on a detailed description of the research methods used in conducting the study as well as on data collected from the pre-tests and post-tests of both experimental and comparison groups.

Chapter four: Chapter four focuses on the conclusions and recommendations formulated from the research findings.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Research findings from the collected data indicate that emotional awareness can be taught in the same manner as cognitive development. This section indicates the conclusions reached by the researcher based on the key findings of the research study.

- The developmental phase of middle childhood (six to twelve years old) was the focus of the study in terms of its target group. This developmental phase is associated with various developments on a physical, cognitive, social and personality level (McGoldrick et al., 2011:31; Louw & Louw, 2007). The phase also marks a stage when children begin to become aware of their internal qualities and self-esteem. Self-concepts are shaped with emotional awareness starting to play an important role (Middle childhood..., 2008:1). These developments, including emotional growth, occur concurrently where the one affects the other (Middle childhood..., 2008:1). This gives rise to the suitability of the Gestalt approach for this study as it refers to the concept of holism where the child is seen in his/her entirety as a whole and integrated being (Blom, 2006).
- The measuring instrument used for this study was a standardised questionnaire, the LEAS-C, specifically developed by Bajgar and Lane (2003) to measure emotional awareness in children. The LEAS-C has three components, namely the questionnaire, scoring manual and the glossary of words where the glossary of words consists of four levels (levels zero to three) based on emotional weight (Knoetze, 2012:175). The questionnaire, on the other hand, consists of twelve open-ended questions/scenarios which are scored according to the above-mentioned glossary of words for emotional experiences of the self and those of others (Knoetze, 2012:176-177). The emotional awareness of the respondents is thereafter determined by the scoring of each of the twelve scenarios which are structured in a child-friendly manner and which were administered in a group setting for all to be exposed to a similar stimulus.

The results confirmed the child-friendly nature of the measuring instrument and the applicability of the instrument in measuring emotional awareness in children during the middle childhood phase of development

- Emotional intelligence is defined as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and the feelings and emotions of others, to discriminate amongst them and to use this information to guide one’s feelings and actions” (Salovey et al., 2004:5). Without emotional awareness, this important construct and skill of being emotionally intelligent, which has a considerable impact on the performance of human beings, would not be possible or might not have the full impact that is expected. Emotional awareness is thus a prerequisite for emotional intelligence where the level of emotional awareness will result in either lower or advanced emotional intelligence (Knoetze, 2012:108). Emotional awareness could therefore be seen to be the foundation on which emotional intelligence is built.
- The focus of the formal education system is on fostering and enhancing academic performance and the holistic functioning of children through cognitive skill development. The study, however, aimed at demonstrating the important and relevant contribution of enhancing emotional development, specifically emotional awareness, of children. This Emotional Awareness Programme more specifically aimed to determine whether “emotional skills could successfully be developed during class activities” Knoetze (2012). This was seen in the findings which show that the emotional awareness of the experimental group increased after they were exposed to the seven-week Emotional Awareness Programme. The advantages of children being emotionally aware within the educational setting and beyond are corroborated by research, indicating that social and emotional competence in children is linked to academic success and personal well-being, as well as community contributors (Jameson, 2004). Early studies conducted by Knoetze (2006) indicate that educators also value emotional awareness as a contributing factor to the optimal and healthy development of children, as well as the key role played by the educational system in this endeavour.
- The Emotional Awareness Programme was previously implemented within a public school setting with results indicating the successful implementation of the Emotional

Awareness Programme with regard to the enhancement of the emotional awareness in children in the middle childhood phase of development. The results of this study, which was conducted within a private school setting, give value to the Emotional Awareness Programme as it indicates that it can successfully be implemented in different school settings.

- The findings prove all three of the sub-hypotheses but more so in the cases of sub-hypothesis two and three as the implementation of the Emotional Awareness Programme for children in middle childhood within the education setting did in fact enhance their ability to discriminate between different emotions (sub-hypothesis 2) and their ability to verbalise and 'own' their emotions (sub-hypothesis 3).
- The Emotional Awareness Programme to which the experimental group has been exposed has increased the respondents' ability with regard to emotional vocabulary, emotional expression and ultimately emotional awareness. This is seen in the decrease in the use of weak emotion words and the increase in the strong emotion words where weak emotion words are used in everyday language while strong emotion words carry more value in terms of emotional meaning attached to them. Emotional vocabulary could be seen in the emotional awareness levels of respondents measured from the value attached to the emotion words in the glossary of words which forms part of the LEAS-C as a measuring instrument. The empirical results with regard to emotional expression indicate there was an increase in the use of emotional blends.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the findings indicating the positive achievement of the set goal, the researcher has made the following recommendations:

- The researcher conducted the research study with thirteen respondents in the experimental group and six respondents in the comparison group. It would be valuable for future research studies to be conducted with a much larger target audience in order to extract representative findings.

- As the participants in the study were between the ages of nine and 10 and from a private school, it could be beneficial for the age range to be extended to incorporate a population which includes adolescents, children in alternative care such as temporary and permanent places of safety, as well as children who have been exposed to traumatic experiences.
- The sample used in the study was from a private school which allows for the assumption that they are exposed to different social, emotional and cognitive experiences than would a child from a school in a rural community. The researcher therefore recommends future research to be conducted to include a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic representation of all race groups in South Africa.
- The research findings indicate that the emotional awareness, emotional vocabulary as well as emotional expression of the children exposed to the Emotional Awareness Programme increased after just seven weeks. Extending the Programme to be part of the curriculum over a longer period would be beneficial to the learners.

4.6 ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

A discussion of how the goal and objectives of the research study were accomplished by the researcher forms the premise of this section of the chapter. The discussion includes the achievement of the goal, followed by a tabular discussion of the achievement of each of the five objectives of the study.

The goal of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an Emotional Awareness Programme to enhance the level of emotional functioning of children in middle childhood in a private school setting in Hartbeespoort in the North West Province. This goal was achieved through the accomplishment of the objectives as illustrated in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1: Accomplishment of the objectives of the study

Objective	Achievement of objective
1. To conceptualise emotional awareness theoretically with specific emphasis on children in the middle childhood developmental phase within an educational setting	This objective was achieved through an in-depth and thorough literature review in chapter two (2). The discussion primarily focused on the concepts emotion, emotional awareness, emotional intelligence and the middle childhood developmental phase.
2. To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will enhance the ability of learners in middle childhood to be in contact with their emotions	The second objective was achieved through the analysis of the data in chapter three provided by the respondents during pre- and post-tests.
3. To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to discriminate between different emotions	The third objective was achieved through the administration of the pre-test and post-tests before and after exposure to the Emotional Awareness Programme. The data obtained was then analysed in chapter three.
4. To evaluate whether an Emotional Awareness Programme will increase the ability of learners in middle childhood to verbalise and 'own' their emotions	This objective was achieved through the analysis in chapter three of data provided by the respondents in their pre- and post-tests.
5. To draw conclusions about the applicability of the Emotional Awareness Programme in a private school setting	Chapter four shows conclusions and recommendations regarding the programme.

4.7. SUMMARY

The role played by emotional awareness in the overall development of the child in the middle developmental phase is of great importance. The development of emotional awareness, based on the empirical findings in chapter three, can be achieved in the same manner as cognitive aptitude. This therefore provides the educational system with an opportunity to play a key role in the development of emotional awareness of children.

The goal and objectives were accomplished through a thorough literature review and the analysis of information collected throughout the seven-week period during which the Emotional Awareness Programme was implemented. The findings allowed the researcher to formulate conclusions and recommendations which would allow for the enrichment of the educational curriculum as well as for guidance with regard to future research endeavours in this field.

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