CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The use and abuse of drug and alcohol in all types and level of schools is tremendously increasing amongst learners and educators (Maphoto, 2004:4). This type of practice affects performance, which at the end bring down the Grade twelve results. The chronic victims of this custom, particularly in education become hospitalised, for example, in general hospitals, mental hospitals, or at times sent to rehabilitation centres, in attempt to curb the habitual activity, with its negative, potentially fatal, impact. Drugs or chemical abuse comes out either in alcohol, marijuana or other substances.

Since the intake of drugs also changes the behavioural pattern of an individual, it can wreak havoc in schools. The destructive behaviour of either a learner or educator, who is depended on drugs, can cause trauma, tension guilt, envy and bitterness. It can also tear relationships in shreds, can create resentment and hatred within the educational periphery. The addictive behaviour is unnatural due to the fact that substances abusers may need to begin the day with an "eye opener" and close it with a nightcap (Hugh, 2002:12).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND FOCUS OF INQUIRY AS WELL AS THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.2.1 The research problem
Lack of communication between parents or guardians, demotivated educators and learners can aggravate a drug abuse situation. Stress-related
behaviour amongst learners and educators, stems from addiction to drugs and alcohol. There is a desperate need for research around substance abuse in schools because of its strong negative impact. For example, educators and learners develop distressing behaviour whereby teachers kill one other. There was a case in a high school at Orlando West where a distressed teacher shot and killed his three colleagues (Nizima, 1999:5). The violent climate of our schools is alarming due to drug abuse. Learners bring their parents’ revolvers or guns to school to harm their classmates. Some teachers have sex with learners, at times for a specific fee or reward. Male learners rape girls, mostly when they are under the influence of drugs during school events such as, sports, music competitions, debates, cultural or spring days (Mvimbi, 1999:18).

1.2.2 The research questions

Some specific questions in line with the objectives will be asked, for instance:

1.2.2.1 Sub-questions

- What could be the cause of drug and alcohol abuse in our secondary schools?
- How can the school, together with parents, intervene in such situations?
- Who should be responsible for checking the food parcels that the vendors are selling, to find out if they don’t contain anything that can harm the health of the learners?
- Who should be responsible for monitoring the learners in the school
premises, when checking on them for any drug or alcohol in their belongings?

1.2.3 The extent and seriousness of the problem

It may appear that learners no longer care. They take drugs in the presence of their elders during contact time; they lag behind with their school work; use unacceptable language anytime, anywhere. Some of the learners who take drugs go to the extent of stealing school property and selling it to the community in order to get extra money to go and buy drugs (Mvimbi, 1999:21). At a school where the researcher works, a learner once stole a principal’s jacket hanging in his office. This is just one of the examples, amongst others, that contribute to the seriousness of the problem. Davies, (1991:23) emphasise stealing as one of the characteristics of drug abusers. He affirms that when abusers are out of cents, they prefer stealing so as to buy more drugs.

If only one pupil uses drugs, that school has drug problem. Any head who claims that his school has no drug problem either doesn’t know what is going on at his school, or is lying (Cotton, 1998:38-39). Only through identifying the true extent of the drug problem can something concrete be done about the threat. Wilcocks and Edmund further affirm that drugs are already too established and serious for hall measures or ostrich attitudes (Howard & Margery, 1994:59).

Further it is alleged that in one of the Soweto secondary schools a teacher, who has a reputation as a strict disciplinarian, was shot by an unruly learner. The teacher had to pretend to be dead before the learner would leave him (Mvimbi, 1999:26).
Learners carry guns and terrorize their fellow learners in Soweto schools. In 2003 during a sports day an incident occurred at Orlando Stadium in which boys smoked dagga openly. They then proceeded to vandalize the area, looted the street hawkers and used their guns to shoot at random. Then they hijacked a car. This demonstrates how the problem of drugs is spreading unabated at schools, by children (Mvimbi, 1999:29). This shows how the practice of drugs disturbs the smooth and effective running of education within educational institutions (Mthembu, and Swart, 2003:11).

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The following four aims will form the focus of this research study:

- To discuss and specify the factors that accelerate the habit of drug trafficking and drug abuse amongst learners and the educators within schools.
- To develop and describe opportunities for practicing refusal skills to avoid involvement in drug use.
- To explore and suggest alternative ways of coping with stressful situations and to help strengthen learner’s and educator’s self-concepts.
- To create specific ways of monitoring during breaks and learning periods in order to check for illegal drugs that may happen to be in the learner’s possession.

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE INQUIRY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- The importance of this study is to assist all learners and the educators within secondary schools to know about the danger of abusing drugs.
To assist the educators to implement a drug policy at their schools.
To integrate drug programmes into Life Orientation so as to overcome the situation of drug abuse in schools.

What motivated the researcher to conduct this research was the realization that there’s an alarming increase of secondary school learners who turn out to become dropouts, suicidal and criminals, at a tender age due to drug abuse.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODS, RESEARCH PARADIGM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.5.1 Paradigmatic perspective

The paradigmatic perspective of this research study is supported by Heller’ theory of feelings (1979:7). Heller affirms that for problems to be resolved, one has to be actively involved and share other people’s experiences.

In performing this research study, the researcher attributes the complexity of the phenomenon, “experiences of learners taking drugs during school time”. Ntsayagae, (1999:7-8) suggests that a holistic approach in such a study is applicable.

1.5.2 Research design

The research design consists of a qualitative explorative, descriptive, and contextual approach (Mouton and Marais, 1991:43-51). Qualitative research design will be employed in this study since it focused in exploring people’s life histories or their day to day conduct (Cohen, Manion and Morris, 2000:7). According to Creswell, (1994:12), a phenomenological approach in an interview situation involves the researcher studying respondents in their natural surroundings and keeping a record of her observations. According to
Mathipa, (1989:33), as quoted in Skosana, (2002:14), when the phenomenological method is used, reality is exposed. This method is therefore useful because it will help the research to be objective and free of prejudice. This method will thus assist the researcher to gain a better comprehension of the ideas principals, educators, parents, learners and Gauteng Department Officials concerning the problem of drug abuse in schools. Since the research tries to construct new meaning out of the meaning given by the interviewees the paradigm adopted is constructivism. Meaning is socially constructed in a social situation.

1.5.3 Research paradigm

According to Schwardt, (2001:183) the term paradigm refers to a type of cognitive framework, an ideology. Bogdan and Biklen, (2003:26) refer to a paradigm as a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concept or propositions that orientate thinking.

Therefore in support of the above ideas, the researcher’s role will be to apply qualitative research methods by visiting selected secondary schools, interview learners, educators, principals and the GDE official(s) to gather information about drug abuse. The role of the researcher will then be to make new meanings out of utterances of the interviews. Through the findings of the study the researcher will make recommendations on how the problem of drug abuse can be curbed in secondary schools.

1.5.4 Research methods (data collection strategy)

Data will be collected through observation, which individual interviews using a tape recorder, transcripts and field-notes. Each method attempts to capture people’s words and actions (Maykut and Morehouse, 1995:68).
During data gathering, the researcher needs to exploit skills like prompting when relevant, listening, encouraging; elaborating; clarification and paraphrasing (McMillan, 2000:270-7).

This research study will use the qualitative research method, the in-depth phenomenological interview method and observations as it is best suited to understanding of the “lived experiences” of the participants in a natural setting (Cresswell, 1994:10-12).

1.5.4.1 Literature control

The researcher will consider past work in her field of study to improve the research study carried out. This is supported by Botes, (1993:11). Sadiki, (2001:15) also mentions that the result of the research should therefore be discussed with reference to the relevant literature and data obtained.

1.5.4.2 Observation and observational notes

According to Schwandt (2001:179), observation is explained as direct firsthand eyewitness accounts of everyday social action and is regarded as essential to answering the classic fieldwork question, “what is going on here?”

Dewey, in Schwandt (2001:179), views observation as a method which has underlying epistemological assumptions that are subject to strong criticism. He further adds that observation is part of the ‘gaze’ of an ‘ocular epistemology’ that privileges visual representation, and facial expression, wrongly assumes a relatively seamless link between textual representations. In this study these would be between some transcriptions of audiotapes and photographs taken and the way the world really is.
In this study, interaction takes place between the interviewee and the interviewer. There is an inclusion of verbal and non-verbal communication between themselves. A relaxed natural posture, nodding agreement as well as using limited utterances such as “umm”, “hmn”, “Ja no” or “yes” (De Vos, 2000:308-9). Attending behaviour like these will display high standing for interviewees and the interviewer’s sincerity, empathy, and honesty, aggravating the significant sense of equality between the parties. The observational notes are going to be secured in order to describe the setting in which the people are and what they do according to what the researcher observes.

1.5.4.3 Interview

The interview method was used to gather information from respondents. Unstructured interviews were conducted with open ended questions and the researcher was not influential to the responses of interviewees. In this research study principals, educators, parents, LRC and the DGE officials acted as participants who were interviewed. A tape recorder was used to ensure that everything said was captured (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993:85; McMillan, 2000:252)

A tape recorder will be utilized provided the sample permits it. The transcribed data will be analyzed.

1.6 ETHICAL MEASURES

Guba’s model to ascertain trustworthiness is applied to provide validity and reliability of this qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:219). The model is grounded on the symbolism of the following aspects:
• Truth value: transferability
• Applicability: transferability
• Consistency: dependability and
• Neutrality: conformability.

Chapter 2 will provide a set of ethical principles to which the study will adhere in order to protect participants from any kind of harm or risk (Holloway and Wheel, 1996:39). Participants need to be ensured that they will not be exploited by the study (Holloway and Wheel, 1996:39). Participants will not be exploited by the study in any way.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study examines the problem of learners, non-teaching staff and educators who abuse drugs and alcohol beverages during school or working hours. The research is limited to the selected Soweto secondary or high schools that fall under GDE district 11. The field of study is Educational Management and not Psychology of education.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

Due to financial, time and distance confinements, it was not practicable to involve all the high schools in Soweto. Meeting with parents was also a problem as some are working, hence the researcher thought it wise for her to interview them telephonically. At some stage, the tape recorder (audio visual aid) gave the researcher a problem as it did not work properly. Hence she only relied on field-notes and transcripts for data collection. In some instances the researcher could not get members of the LRC as they were
preparing for preliminary examinations and educators organized victims of drug abuse to be interviewed.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF BASIC CONCEPTS

The key concepts that have been used throughout the research study need to be clarified. These are some of the basic concepts:

- **Intervention**

To intervene is to come in between or to interrupt. De Miranda (2004:34) reports that to intervene successfully one must fully understand and accept the need for intervention into the drug abuser’s deteriorating lifestyle. In this research study, intervention refers to coming in between of the educator to the action of the drug abuser with the intention of encouraging the discontinuation of the drug use. The goal of intervention is to get the drug abuse-dependent person to accept reality and the fact that he needs help with his drinking or smoking problem.

- **Strategies**

A strategy means a plan, course of action or a design to achieve something.

- **Drug abuse**

It refers to the use of a substance in such a manner that the drug use causes problems or greatly increases the chance of problems occurring. The problems may be social (including legal), occupational, psychological or physical (Ray and Ksir 1993:4).
The word refers to a formal educational setting, whereby a large group of learners are taught according to standards approved by the government and society.

Snuffers

According to Watson (1999:80) snuffers refer to learners who sniff glue, cleaning fluid, cocaine and the others.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD USED IN THIS STUDY

Data analysis of the transcripts and information recorded on audiotape will be conducted. Qualitative analysis focuses on the understanding rather than the explanation. According to Rubin and Babbie (1993:125), the researcher needs to keep a complete record of all interviews and observational information. Any information obtained in the course of the research, that is, transcribed interviews and observations as reflected in the field notes, will be subject to data analysis and control (Burns and Grove 1997:8).

1.11 CHAPTER DELINEATION

Chapter 1: This chapter deals with the following aspects:

Introduction, statement of the problem and significance of the study, Aims of the study, Research design and methods, data collection strategy, data analysis, demarcation of the study, limitations of the study, Clarification of basic terms chapter delineation, conclusion.

Chapter 2 deals with relevant research literature on intervention strategies for drug abuse in secondary schools.
Chapter 3 focuses on the implementation of research methodology and recording of raw data. It contains the introduction; aims of the research; reasons for choosing the qualitative methodology; the research; reasons for choosing the qualitative methodology; the interview as a technique in qualitative research; forms of interviewing; the role of the research; interview guide; ethical considerations; recording of raw data and conclusion.

Chapter 4 deals with analysis of data and recording of findings from this study. It has the following divisions: introduction; methods of data analysis; the process of qualitative analysis; presentation and discussion of research categories and conclusion.

Chapter 5 deals with synthesis, the findings of the research, as well as recommendations and conclusion(s).

1.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the introduction to the research problem, aims of the research, research design, research methods, data analysis, data collection strategy, limitations of the study, clarification of basic concepts and division of the chapters were highlighted.

In the next chapter, relevant literature will be reviewed in order to obtain recent research findings on the intervention strategies dealing with drugs trafficking and alcohol abuse, and how it is perceived by principals, educators, parents and learners.