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# CHAPTER 4

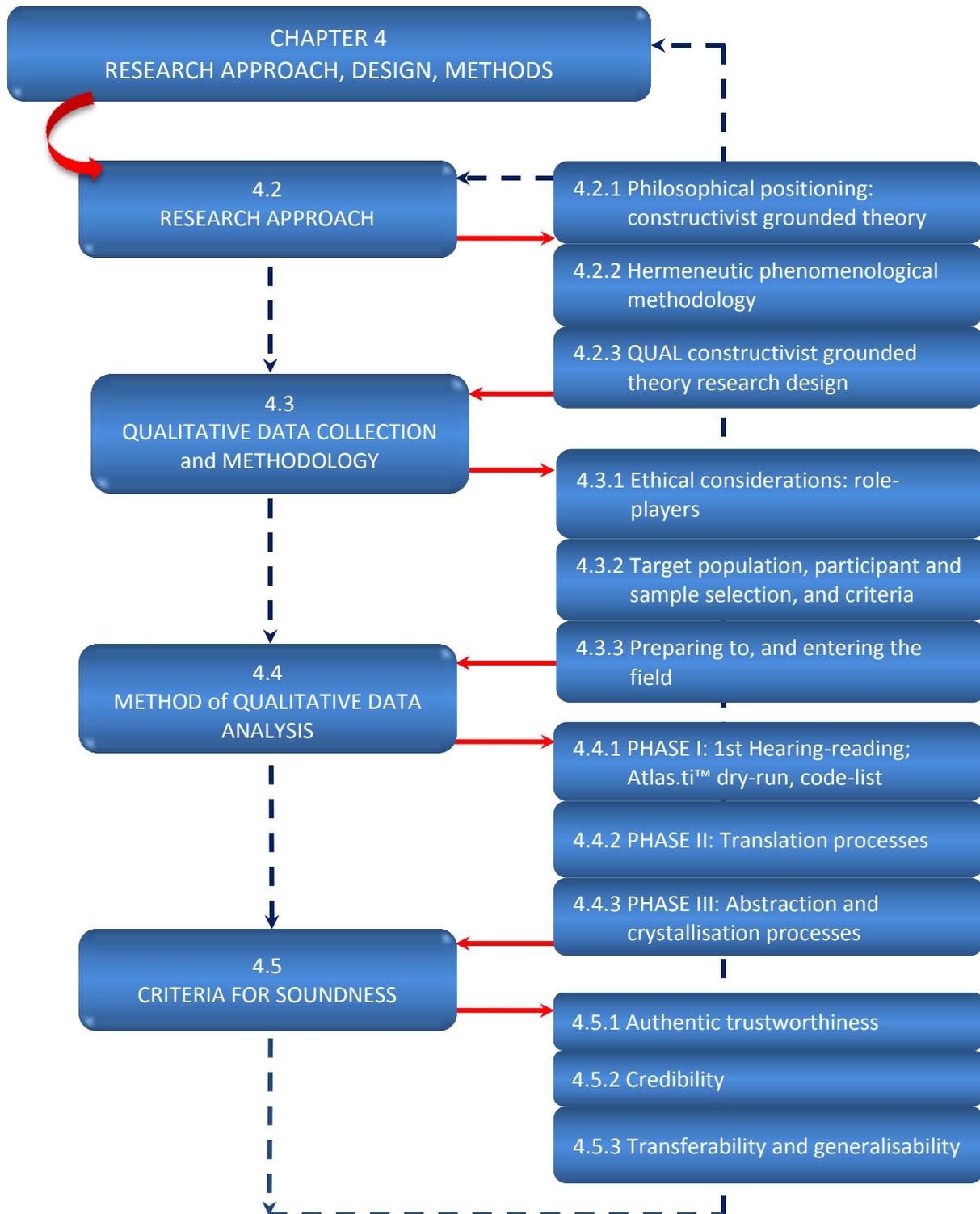
## Research approach, design and methods

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# CHAPTER 4 LOGIC

Management strategies for effective social justice practice in schools



# CHAPTER 4

## Research approach, design and methods

Management strategies for effective social justice practice in schools

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher understands the research design as a holistic all-inclusive architecture of the entire research process that consisted of two phases. The first phase dealt with the conceptualisation of the research problem and question (Chapter One), and the contextual (Chapter Two) and theoretical framework (Chapter Three) which confirmed that there is a lacuna in the literature with regard to the research problem: **what management strategies can be developed and used to advance effective social justice practice in schools?**

The second phase, not separate from the first, consisted of the research approach and the empirical design, methods and processes of data collection and analysis (Chapter Four). Therefore the purpose of the second phase, the empirical section, is to provide a functional plan, i.e. the philosophical positioning as research approach or paradigm (§4.2) to the qualitative methodological decisions of data collection (§4.3) and the qualitative data methodological decisions made that concerned the analysis procedures (§4.4). This chapter concludes with criteria for soundness or ethicality (§4.5). These four aspects served as drivers to acquire a reliable and valid body of data for empirically grounded analyses, conclusions and theory building.

The research approach that established the researcher's position on the continuum of traditions, paradigms or worldviews within social science research was clarified in the following discussion on the chosen research approach.

### 4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach is a philosophical and paradigmatic justification (§4.2.1) for the research methodology. The justification includes philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions, or worldviews, that, on a practical level, provide a distinct empirical research methodology (§4.2.2) and design, methods and procedures (§4.2.3) to guide this research (Creswell, 2009:5). Therefore the first section of Chapter Four establishes the researcher's basic set of beliefs, the paradigm that informed her research approach and guided her actions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b:183).

#### 4.2.1 A philosophical positioning: constructivist grounded theory

It is not the role or aim of this chapter, nor of this research, to report on the paradigm wars, philosophical debates and inconsistencies of philosophical ideas (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:16). These philosophical ideas and resultant wars seem to be laid to rest in recent

publications of proponents of these paradigms. Noteworthy is that both Creswell (2012:537) and McMillan (2012), in their 2012 scholarly editions on research, totally shy away from referring to paradigms or worldviews. However, as Carter and Little (2007:1319) ascertain, a theory of knowledge is inescapable. Merriam (2009:8) supports this notion when she postulates that a philosophical positioning of qualitative research is necessary to explain what one believes about the nature of reality or ontology and of knowledge and epistemology. Carter and Little (2007:1320) continue to argue that paradigms determine methods, which in turn justify the methods, and methods produce knowledge, and as such methods have epistemic content. But, warns Potgieter (2012:111-126), it is important to understand that the paradigms discussed in Chapter One of this research are neither similar to, nor semantic or conceptual substitutes for the three main streams of thought as far as research methodology is concerned.

The three main streams of thought with regard to research methodology are the literature study, quantitative and qualitative research methods, with a fourth emergent field where QUAN-QAUL or mixed-methods (Creswell & Garrett, 2008; Mertens, 2011) are used. For Creswell (2012:537) the purpose of paradigms lies in its integrational properties. These notions correspond with Silverman's (2001:39) four qualitative idioms, i.e. naturalism, ethno-methodology, emotionalism and post-modernism, which in combination provide the voice for the researcher to construct her own theory on effective social justice praxis (Saldaña, 2009:86). Suffice it therefore to state that a variety of scientific world views or paradigms exist in the literature.

Jürgen Habermas' thesis (dated 1971) proclaims three basic categories of human interest, prediction, understanding and emancipation. These three categories are underscored by knowledge claims, and in turn each knowledge claim is underpinned by a specific paradigm resulting in a preferred methodology (Potgieter & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). These paradigms represent a distinct method of inquiry which offers different approaches to the generation and legitimising knowledge claims of positivism, interpretivism and critical theory (Potgieter, 2011:8-10):

1. **Prediction** as knowledge claim, with as worldview, positivism, uses **quantitative methods**. This research is not positioned within the positivist tradition because epistemologically positivism as worldview departs from the notion that physical and social realities are independent from the person who is investigating any one of the realities (Van der Vyver, 2011:120). Quantitative research wants to explain and predict, confirm and validate and test theory which this research is not about.
2. **Understanding** as knowledge claim, with as worldview, interpretivism, is based on constructed reality, using **qualitative methods** brought about through communication, the use of language and inter-subjectivity. It deals with a holistic approach, has unknown variables, flexible guidelines and emergent methods (Smit, 2009:3). Smit, as does Merriam

(2009:1), also include notions of contextuality and personal views and skills. This approach was chosen and expanded on in the following paragraphs.

3. **Emancipation** as knowledge claim, with as worldview, critical theory, uses **qualitative** and **quantitative methods**. Emancipatory researchers claim that human society is organised along power-lines. The adjectival qualifier 'critical' in this paradigm aims to bring about order and emancipation of the socially oppressed which may require that the status quo of power-relations is challenged and subverted. Although the notion of social justice is strongly supported by scholars who position themselves in the corner of emancipatory and critical research such as Paolo Freire and Henry Giroux who have adopted a worldview of critical theory, this research is not about emancipation and is not about challenging the existing order.

Creswell (2007:19-23) emphasises post-positivism (following from Habermas' positivism); social constructivism (in *idem* with Habermas' position of constructed reality); advocacy and/or participatory (in *idem* with Habermas' position on emancipation) that focuses on social change for oppressed groups, under which a study of social justice would fit comfortably, and lastly pragmatism (concerned with the outcomes of a study). Because of the emotion involved in studying a concept such as social justice, one would tend to associate with the third knowledge claim, which this researcher initially did (Saldaña, 2009:86). At the outset of this research, she envisaged and designed her research on a critical/emancipatory worldview that favoured a mixed methods approach. As the literature study progressed and, deep into the process of data-collection and analyses, it became apparent that this study was leaning towards an authentic qualitative constructivist grounded theory paradigm. This kind of development in qualitative research is known as emergent and often found in qualitative-grounded theory research (Creswell, 2007:37; Merriam, 2009:169) and this research was no different.

This change of heart towards an authentic, qualitative constructivist-grounded theory paradigm may be ascribed to personality characteristics required for this type of research and a natural inclination and feeling of tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity, sound communication skills, empathy and good listening and communication skills (Merriam, 1998:20-25) and the researcher's stance that she is not researching social injustices *per se*, she would rather focus on positive stories and experiences of social justice praxis. This ambivalence became more apparent during the data-collection and analysis phase. After the completion of the interviews (§4.3.2), the researcher detected incongruence in terms of her chosen methodology. In recording interviews with purposively selected participant-principals known for their social justice practices (§4.3.2.3) and afterwards asking the same target group to complete a questionnaire, would prejudice these participant-principals and would not deliver objective findings. The other consideration was a more practical one in that only eight of the total of twenty-five of the participant-principals returned the questionnaires.

In the final instance it was a personal encounter with Sharan Merriam (guest-lecturer at the February 2012 MEd and PhD-workshop at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus) which brought about a change in the preferred research approach, design and methodology when the feeling of incongruence was validated. Merriam was convinced that the mixed methods design would yield discrepancies and contaminate data and findings. Her advice was to follow only a qualitative methodology to address the primary research question. Merriam's view was shared with the promoter and co-promoter to this study, who agreed that the incongruence of the mixed methods route, the insufficient number of questionnaires, and especially Merriam's advice, would be enough grounds to change from a mixed methods paradigm to a single, qualitative, method study.

In a nutshell Creswell's (2012:19) QUAN-QUAL continuum and Potgieter's (2011:8-10) perspective on worldviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to determine her own position (Creswell, 2007:7-8). She assumed human agency (phenomenology), attended to the interpretation of conversational language (hermeneutic), and viewed social processes as open-ended, continuous, and emergent (constructivist-interpretivist) based on grounded theory of the Chicago school tradition (Charmaz, 2005:521), which theory is inductively created from the study of effective social justice praxis (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:77). In addition to the constructivist-interpretivist position, the researcher also considered Charmaz's (2005:508) advocacy of grounded theory in combination with a constructivist-interpretivist approach. This combination provided the tools for the analysing processes that were valuable in studying effective social justice praxis. Charmaz (2005:509) calls this approach a **constructivist grounded theory** and this researcher followed suit.

This **constructivist grounded theory approach** locates the observer/researcher in the constructed world of those that she observed. This process entailed that the researcher turned the constructed contexts that she entered into a series of presentations: field-notes, interviews, conversations, recordings and memos. Accordingly qualitative constructivist-grounded theory provided meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007:36). Ajjawi and Higgs (2007:613) postulate that the [constructivist]-interpretive research paradigm is found on the epistemology of idealism, in line with this researcher's thinking that schools do offer good social justice practices, viewed as social constructions of reality. This held the potential to generate new understandings of complex multi-dimensional human phenomena - social justice - in a contextualised and pragmatic - praxis - sense (Merriam, 2009:1). In fact the very title and research question are about management strategies to advance effective social justice practice to understand the participant-principals' experiences (Merriam, 2009:5, 13), also known as the study of experience (Friesen, 2009).

### 4.2.2 A hermeneutic phenomenological methodology

It is therefore appropriate to investigate in order to understand social justice as human phenomenon and the action of praxis that enhance this phenomenon by means of a qualitative constructivist-grounded theory design embedded within a **hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology**. In this research the hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology explores, describes and analyses the meaning of lived experiences of management strategies for social justice practice (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007:616; Marshall & Rossman, 2011:19), inductively derived at from the study of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:77). This researcher accepts and acknowledges that she is studying lived experiences developed and articulated consciously and that it entails a study of the actioning, the praxis, of management strategies in its contexts (Creswell, 2007:58). These acknowledgements include her accepting that the actions and contexts are non-transferable, temporal and that the findings will have a personal view (Smit, 2009:3). The development of descriptive accounts of the principals' experiences are essential and the intentionality of consciousness of both the researcher and the researched are of paramount importance (Creswell, 2007:59).

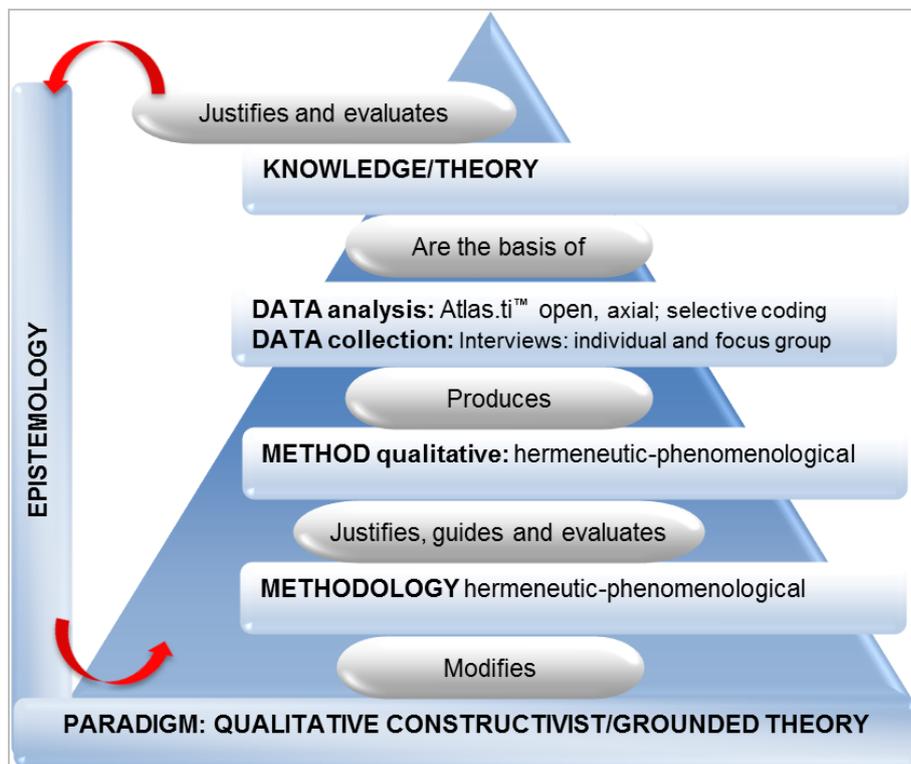
Qualitative constructivist-grounded theory encompasses a number of research approaches that are fundamentally about interpretation - *verstehen* - and its extent (Friesen, 2009). Interpretivism foregrounds meaning-making of experiences; is about inter-subjectivity and co-creating of meanings and foregrounds hermeneutical and phenomenological interpretations. Interestingly interpretivism is regarded as a school of thought in contemporary jurisprudence and the philosophy of law (Potgieter, 2012:115), which is important as social justice is imbedded in the South African Constitution and associated legislation and policies. Friesen (2009) provides four explanations of why researchers are inclined to follow a qualitative research methodology based on a constructivist-interpretive research paradigm: the first option is that of choice of either being detached or involved in the research; the second option is recognising that knowledge should be seen as mood (or *Befindlichkeit*); thirdly as language (hermeneutics), and lastly as communication in a shared environment and shared mood (atmosphere or *Mitbefindlichkeit*). It follows the Utrecht School of thought on writing and gathering data and reports in phenomenological writings and anecdotes that provide an understanding of the phenomenon and, more importantly, ensure trustworthiness (Friesen, 2009).

Whereas this qualitative design of constructivist-grounded theory is embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology, Ajjawi and Higgs's (2007:616) argument that phenomenology is essentially the study of perceptions of lived experience of life worlds, becomes relevant. A study that emphasises the world as lived entity or reality experienced by one person cannot be separated from that person. This view is similar to that of Gadamer who states that long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination and reflection, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and country in

which we live (Friesen, 2009). This understanding oneself and others is similar to the African world view of *Ubuntu* (§3.4.2.2), and even more importantly, similar to a qualitative design embedded within the hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology. The tenets of this methodology that underpins this research design drew parallels with *Ubuntu* (§3.4.2.2; Chapter Five), i.e. that of religious-spirituality, consensus building and dialogue (Nafukho, 2006:410).

As these constructed perspectives emerged from the field, and not so much from the research literature, the process related to this research was important because the ultimate purpose was to develop a theory about these strategies from the data that were systematically gathered and analysed (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:77) to ensure effective social justice practice. Therefore this researcher's interest was to understand knowledge claims on the phenomenon of effective social justice praxis departing from a **qualitative constructivist grounded theory** paradigm that provided the philosophical and paradigmatic grounding for the research design that would result in a **hermeneutic-phenomenological** methodology.

This emergent approach was decided on after considering what an approach is and which paradigms and practical considerations underpin the research methodology of this study. A visual depiction of the discussion thus far enhances the understanding of the chosen research paradigm and approach, its methods and methods. From Carter and Little (2007:1317), an adapted version of the simple relationship between paradigm, epistemology, methodology and methods to create theory is presented. Figure 4.1 and the overview of the research design (§4.3.1) are specifically designed to indicate the interwoven nature of the constructivist-grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2005:509; Creswell, 2007:65).



**FIGURE 4.1:** Research approach

However, Denzin (2009:103) warns that if not truly understood, grounded theory's dangers are multiple. Notwithstanding these reservations, this study remains true to the qualitative design of constructivist-grounded theory embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology by means of which the researcher interpreted the data. It provides an abstract analytical schema of the processes involved prior, during and after the data collection and analysis phases. Because this research was about developing a theory that will explain the phenomenon of effective social justice practice, the theories are not predetermined but emerged from the data (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:223; Creswell, 2007:62; Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:77); the researcher remained close to the life-worlds of the participants (Charmaz, 2005:507; 512), and premised that constructivist-grounded theory refers to method of inquiry and to the product of inquiry found in data from the participant-principals' experiences thereof (Charmaz, 2005:507; Creswell, 2007:62). The findings of this study were based in the accounts and observations of the everyday life-worlds of the participant-principals (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:77).

This researcher accepts that no single, observable reality exists, but more importantly, working within the qualitative design of constructivist-grounded theory embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology, she leans toward the anti-foundational by refusing to adopt any permanent, unvarying standard by which truth or knowledge may be known (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:204). As insider she is able to give one representation of the reality observed during the interviews, whilst her emotional-persona fed from the feelings of her participant-principals, which underscores her understanding of the participant-principals' constructed experiences (Friesen, 2009:7).

Although this research deals with social justice phenomena, it tends to lean towards a more realistic and objective evaluation of social justice practices and their management. This innate inclination guided her towards the use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), and, more specifically, she used the analytical tool Atlas.ti™ computer programme. Other qualitative data analysis software programmes similar to Atlas.ti™ are HyperResearch, MAXODA, XSIGHT, AnSWR, CDC EZ-Text and NVivo (Creswell, 2012:242-243; Merriam, 2009:198). Her natural inclination and the software applications as well as institutional support for the Atlas.ti™ programme supported her emphasis on rigorous and thorough qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007:62; Creswell, 2012:241-242; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a:24). By using the Atlas.ti™ computer programme the researcher was able to organise her transcripts, go through the coding process, search, retrieve and browse all data segments for information, group the data codes and frequency tables to build unique categories presented in network heuristics that allowed her to connect visually selected passages and codes in a concept map (Creswell, 2012:242; Merriam, 2009:193-197).

A summary of the research approach is presented in Table 4.1 (Creswell, 2007:17-19):

Considerations	Approach towards participants' experiences of the studied phenomenon
<b>Ontology</b> (relativist nature/reality of phenomenon)	Multiple realities exist Reporting on how participant-principals view their experiences differently.
<b>Epistemology</b> (subjectivist knowing)	As close as possible to participants in their work contexts Collaborative/Co-creators Insider.
<b>Axiology</b> (values)	Researcher admits the value-laden nature of the research She actively reported her own values and biases and those gathered from the field She positioned herself and declared her own assumptions of the phenomenon.
<b>Rhetoric</b> (language)	Writings are personal, but formal, and in a literary format Language is personal, literary, informal as it was spoken, but formal in its reporting and is based on evolving definitions She uses qualitative terms and limited definitions within an engaging style. However she did not comply with the principle that qualitative researchers use the first person pronoun "I" and used "the researcher" instead.
<b>Ethical considerations</b> (§4.3.1; §4.5)	Authenticity and trustworthiness Credibility Transferability and generalisability.
<b>Methodological considerations</b> (naturalistic) (§4.3)	Emergent/emerging design Shaped by researcher's experience in collecting and analysing data Contextual The research design changed fundamentally at a late stage Originally she planned a mixed-methods research design, but this study became: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a qualitative constructivist-grounded theory embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology design;</li> <li>• the data-collection strategy, planned before the empirical research phase, needed to be modified to accompany the move to a qualitative study.</li> </ul> The hermeneutic-phenomenological methods used were <b>individual</b> and <b>focus group interviews</b> , which included a discussion of observations.
<b>The purpose of the interviews</b> (§4.4.2)	To qualitatively analyse effective social justice praxis in schools.
<b>Data-analysis</b> (§4.4.3)	LOGIC: Inductive, from the GROUND UP: During the data-analysis phase the researcher followed a path of analysing the data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of social justice praxis in schools.

**TABLE 4.1:** Considerations to determine the research approach and design

Resulting from the discussion above is the research design that was followed in this study will now be elucidated.

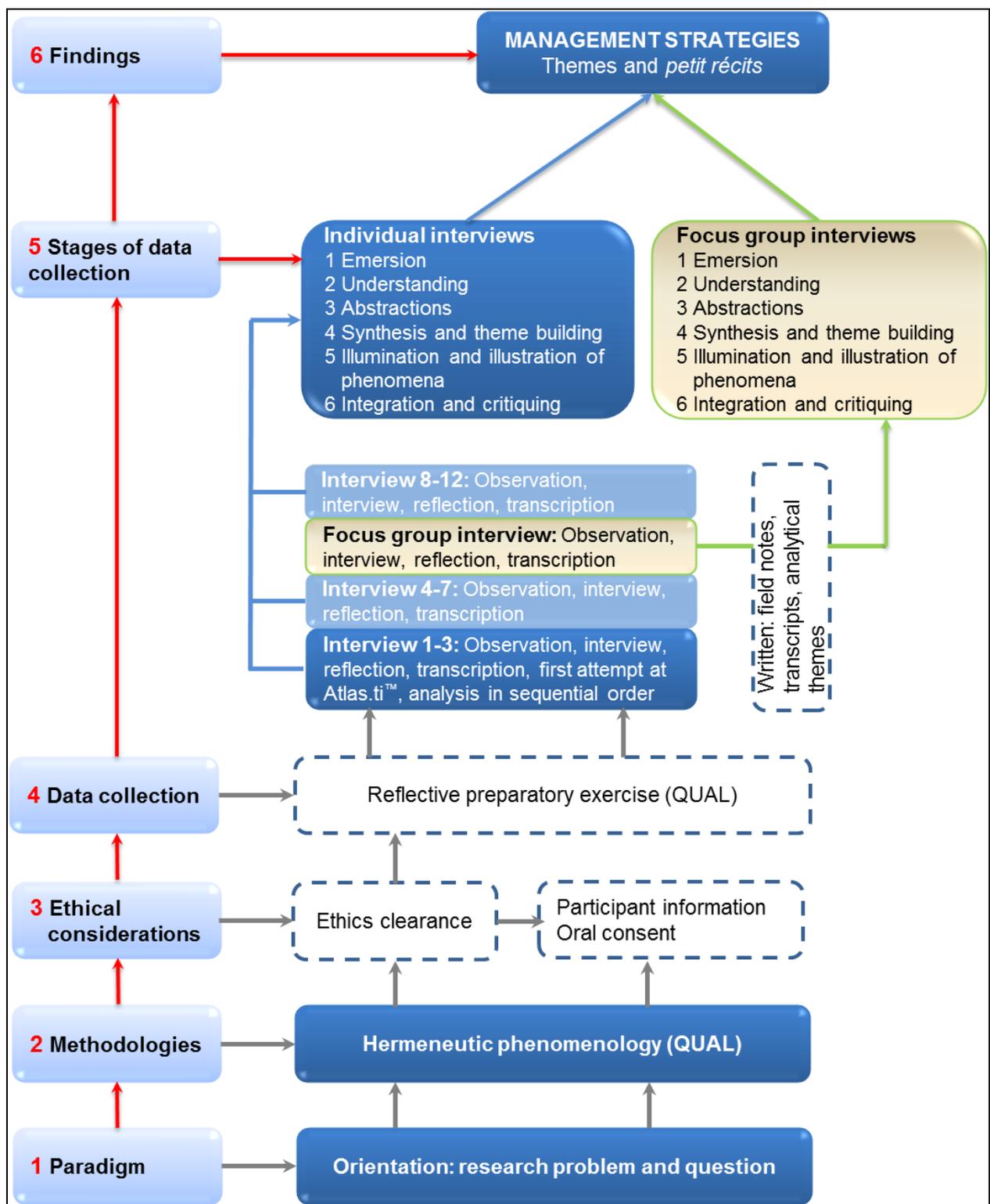
### 4.2.3 A qualitative constructivist-grounded theory research design

The decision to use a qualitative constructivist-grounded theory research design is based on the premise that the data thus collected, analysed and interpreted, will yield a deeper understanding of the qualitative data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:91). This research design embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology approach also supports Laverly's idea of viewing hermeneutic-phenomenology studies as a movement similar to the notion of social justice as dynamo (§3.1).

The corresponding trend of viewing hermeneutic-phenomenology and social justice as movement, emphasises this researcher's position that her understandings of both are constantly evolving and dynamic (Friesen, 2009:7; Griffiths *et al.*, 2003a:xii, 55). This recognition of constant change in both the phenomenon (social justice) and the research design allowed the researcher to interpret the contextual, the personal and subjective relations of both herself as researcher and as co-participant in the research process, and that of the participants, in order to gain an understanding of the participant-principals' experiences and perceptions with regard to the research problem.

Characteristics of the qualitative research design were important and applied in this research (Creswell, 2007:37-39; Merriam, 2009:14-19) as follows: a focus on meaning and understanding, researcher as primary instrument, inductive data-analysis, rich description, emergent, flexible and time spent in the natural setting. The researcher had the necessary competencies and skills which include a questioning stance, tolerance for ambiguity, careful observation, asking good questions, thinking inductively and at ease with writing. All of these characteristics and competencies are evident in the planning and execution of the research design, methods and methods described in Figure 4.2. This Figure gives a more detailed and linear depiction of the research design, methods and methods than Figure 4.1 which shows the relationship between paradigm, epistemology, methodology and methods.

All of these aspects discussed as research approach took into account the notion of reflexivity (Olson, 2011:17-20). These included the researcher's careful choice of words, reflecting on the process and the interrelatedness of all the elements involved in writing down a research-approach methodology. Whilst busy with the execution of the research, the researcher already contemplated the writing up of the data and possible findings, and in so doing she thought iteratively of how her own ontological philosophical assumptions made her who she is and made the research process what it became. From these reflections and processes Figure 4.2 was abstracted as the qualitative research design for this study.



**FIGURE 4.2:** A qualitative research design

The following discussion on the implementation of the methodology, planning and effectuation, is based on the same logic followed in Figure 4.2 and on sequential events.

## 4.3 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study affirms Merriam's (2009:194) statement that "data management is no small aspect of analysis" as it was certainly extremely difficult to clearly separate the preparation for the data collection and the management processes from that of the data-analysis phases. The reporting of this process is done **chronologically**, keeping constantly in mind the chosen methodology for this study, i.e. the hermeneutic-phenomenology methodology (§4.2).

Prior to the data collection phase, or what this researcher calls 'entering the field' started, there were ethical considerations to account for. The hermeneutic-phenomenology methodology (§4.2) of this research guides the thinking about the **ethical considerations** (§4.3.1) with regard to the official **role-players** who were instrumental in determining the participant and sample selection to this study. This was done according to pre-determined criteria (§4.3.2) from the scholarly review of the literature. The discussion concludes with how the researcher prepared and entered the field to collect the qualitative data (§4.3.3).

### 4.3.1 Ethical considerations towards the role-players

#### 4.3.1.1 The role of the researcher

The researcher acknowledges that the reality she was researching is a constructed, ever-changing one dependent on both the researcher, as personal instrument in the research process, and the participating principals whose perceptions of their effective social justice praxis was being studied. The participating principals did not merely provide passive data, but were instrumental to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon and eventual building of theory (Saldaña, 2009:7). Ethical considerations therefore were of extreme importance (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:318; Merriam, 2009:228; Mertens, 2009). The researcher implemented the research in accordance with what Marshall and Rossman (2011:39) refer to as "an ethical mindfulness." As such she saw herself as the research instrument and regarded her presence in the lives of the participating principals as fundamental to the methodology (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:112). She recognised that her role as participant and as researcher served as a filter and would influence the manner of how she conducted and interpreted, and how she perceived, documented and thus coded the data (Saldaña, 2009:7).

Being comfortable with qualitative data collection process herself because of previous experiences and published articles (Leibowitz *et al.*, 2005a; Leibowitz *et al.*, 2005b; Mash *et al.*, 2005a; Mash *et al.*, 2005b; Van Deventer, 2009), the researcher regarded the data collection process as an intimate discussion between two equal participants. This stance assumed that she was involved, not neutral, and that she entered the lives of the participant-principals with dignity and respect. The engagement was a pre-condition for her findings that opened up spaces for advocacy and praxis for effective social justice. Her vantage point was that the knowledge and practices of participant-principals were studied as local knowledge and practice

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a:11). Although not listed as an ethical consideration, the mere fact that she departed from a constructivist-grounded theory that allowed her to study a phenomenon rather than the methods of studying it, should be viewed as an ethical positioning. In taking a reflexive stance on modes of knowing and representation (Charmaz, 2005:509) she was interested in social justice phenomena and therefore paid attention to ideas and actions/praxis that concerned fairness, equity, equality, democratic processes, status, hierarchy and individual and collective rights and duties (Charmaz, 2005:510). All of these are considerations that the researcher accounts for in the analysis of the data (§4.4 and Chapter Five).

Although the researcher is aware that the reporting style in qualitative research is done by using the first person singular “I,” she shied away from this tradition. This was done notwithstanding the advice of one of the promoters to this research. This choice needs to be clarified. She has been schooled in this mode of reporting and is by virtue of her personality not inclined to become too close and personal, but basically departs from a strong sense of respect for the other, a stance that allowed her not to become too familiar with the participant-principals or with the data collected from them.

In a discussion on ethical considerations the NWU’s Ethical clearance procedures were important considerations.

#### 4.3.1.2 The role of the Ethics Committee of the NWU Faculty of Education Sciences

After submitting the official NWU Ethics Application Form<sup>8</sup> to the Faculty of Education Sciences’ Ethics Committee permission was granted to complete the research. An ethic clearance certificate and an **ethical clearance** number were issued:

Research project: Management strategies for effective social justice practice in schools  
Ethic clearance number: **NWU-00124-11-A2** - Date approved: 20 October 2011.

In doing research in public schools, the role of departmental officials is important.

#### 4.3.1.3 The role of departmental officials

In addition to the ethical requirements of the NWU and the considerations regarding the role of the researcher, she complied with the requirements of the NW Department of Education. The ethical aspects regarding the individual interviews were addressed in letters asking permission to do the research and were addressed to and obtained from Dr. A. Seakamela, Director General of the NW Department of Education ([Addendum A](#) and [Addendum B](#)), and his delegated official, Ms. T Mosiane ([Addendum C](#)). These communications included a letter to participant-principals ([Addendum D](#)); the interview protocol (§4.3.3.1 and [Addendum E](#)), and the interview schedule (§4.3.3.2 and [Addendum F](#)).

<sup>8</sup> <https://intranet.nwu.ac.za/opencms/export/intranet/html/en/in-im-rs/researchethics/index.html>

Ms Mosiane delegated the responsibility of selecting the principals in accordance with the set criteria to the four EMGD officials in the four school districts in North-West. Two EMGD officials responded immediately, namely Dr. Philip de Bruyn (Kenneth Kaunda District) and Mr. Buyane Phillips (Dr. Ruth Sekgomotsi Mompoti District). After various unsuccessful attempts to contact the other two officials and promises of returning calls, it was accepted that the other two officials were not able or willing to assist with this research. All the relevant documents were included in e-mail correspondence with all the departmental officials. This experience could be ascribed to what Smit (2009) calls gatekeepers. Having stated the logistical difficulty of obtaining the envisioned data, this researcher wants to reiterate that her decision not to further pursue the other two districts in the NW province was based on the following criteria (Merriam, 2009:173): exhausting of sources, saturation of categories (after the processes of transcribing, editing, analysing all twelve interviews, no or insignificant increments of new information in comparison to the effort expended to extract them, emerged), and emergence of regularities and getting a sense of integration. Even though basic elements for meta-themes could be present during the first six interviews, data saturation occurred within the first twelve interviews (Guest *et al.*, 2006:59).

Merriam (2009:173) also includes over-extension (new information is far removed from the viable categories), which was only evident during Interview 12 (PD14) (Table 4.3). As was the case with the other thirteen interviews the focus of the interview was communicated via e-mail but this interview was not structured according to the interview schedule as it took on a life of its own. The participant-principal took initiative and started the interview by reading a letter from a parent he received and from there the two-hour long interview merely developed around the broad theme of social justice. The researcher carefully guided the discussion with questions, but all in all, as she indicated at the end of the interview, this was an interview in which all the necessary data came to the fore even though none of the questions were asked as was the case during the other eleven interviews. It did mean, however, that over-extension occurred in this particular instance. As the opportunity to hold and record focus group interviews opened up, similar procedures with regard to formal permission and ethical conduct assurances were followed.

Dr. Brian Williams, head of the Cape Winelands School District, was asked ([Addendum G](#)), and gave official permission to conduct focus group interviews ([Addendum H](#)). Included in the email asking permission, were [Addendum D](#), [Addendum E](#) and [Addendum F](#).

#### 4.3.1.4 The role of the participant-principals

The participant-principals did not merely provide passive data, but were instrumental to the understanding and eventual building of theory. Ethical considerations, therefore, were non-negotiables (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:318; Mertens, 2009). With regard to the role of the participant-principals the following sequiturs were accounted for in that they, although identified by the

departmental officials, were not coerced into taking part in the interviews, and their decision to take part or not was entirely theirs (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:318). The researcher endeavoured to protect the participant-principals from harm albeit none were foreseen or accounted for, was asked for and was provided with oral informed consent. Their right to privacy and confidentiality was confirmed, and the researcher acted in an honest and fair manner towards her professional colleagues (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:382).

The following section provides a condensed overview of all the documents used.

#### 4.3.1.5 Documentation used to affirm ethicality

The documents constructed to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity were:

<b>Available on DVD</b>	
<a href="#">Addendum A</a>	Letter to Dr. A. Seakamela, Director General of the NW Department of Education, asking consent to do research
<a href="#">Addendum B</a>	Letter from Dr. A. Seakamela, Director General of the NW Department of Education, granting consent to do research
<a href="#">Addendum C</a>	Letter to Ms. T. Mosiane
<a href="#">Addendum D</a>	Letter to participant-principals
<a href="#">Addendum E</a>	Interview protocol
<a href="#">Addendum F</a>	Interview schedule
<a href="#">Addendum G</a>	E-mail correspondence with Dr. Brian Williams, Head of the Cape Winelands School District, to do research in the district
<b>Available on DVD</b>	
<a href="#">Addendum I</a>	Atlas.ti™ Frequency Table
<a href="#">Addendum J</a>	Atlas.ti™ HU Social Justice_Code-List
<a href="#">Addendum K</a>	<b>MSWord</b> Code_List
<a href="#">Addendum L</a>	<b>Excel</b> format: coding, theme building and categorising
<a href="#">Addendum M</a>	Transcription: Focus Group Interview 1-9 and 12-16
<b>Ethical and language editing documents</b>	
<a href="#">Addendum N</a>	Ethical clearance certificate: NWU Institutional Research Support Office

**TABLE 4.2:** Documents to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity

Thus far, the role of participant-principals was discussed, but none with regard to the research techniques or the selection processes that brought the researcher and participating principals around a ‘discursive’ desk. These aspects will be dealt with next.

#### 4.3.2 Target population, participant and sample selection, and criteria

The decision to do interviews, both individual and focus group interviews, was made in accordance with the qualitative constructivist-grounded research design.

#### 4.3.2.1 The purpose of the interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to qualitatively analyse effective social justice praxis in schools (Table. 4.1). Charmaz (2011:360) refers to this method of qualitative inquiry as one in which data collection and analysis reciprocally inform and shape each other through an emergent iterative process. In addition she claims that the term, 'grounded theory,' is about this method and it is about the method's product, a theory that is the result of successive conceptual analyses of data. The decision to do interviews as method of data collection on the phenomenon effective social justice praxis in selected schools, co-determined the target population, participants and sample selection. Initially only individual interviews were planned for with a possibility of focus groups (§1.5.3.2) but as the opportunity presented to do focus group interviews in another province, the target population changed accordingly.

#### 4.3.2.2 Target population

##### *Individual interviews*

The interviews were viewed as an interaction between two people on the participant's views of effective social justice praxis and conversations amongst peers. As such the interviews were neither subjective nor objective but were inter-subjective (Mertens, 2009) in order to understand common experiences of the participant-principals (Creswell, 2007:61).

The target population, who served as a pool for the participant selection process, were twelve (12) principals and two deputy-principals of secondary and combined schools employed by the Department of Education in two districts in the North-West Province in South Africa. Based on the principles of fairness and the qualitative constructivist-grounded theory and design embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology (§4.2), a **disproportional stratified purposive sampling procedure** (Mouton, 2001:79) was used to determine the sample population of the participant-principals and/or deputy principals. They had to meet the pre-determined and disclosed criteria (§4.3.2.3). The final participant list included principals and deputies who were acknowledged for their general best practices for social justice (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:328, 329; Monteith, 2011:136; Van Vuuren, 2008:7). In this case the number of participants in each stratum did not reflect proportionally the population but would provide room for all population groups to be represented on a fair and equal basis.

##### *Focus group interviews*

Convenience sampling or "accidental sampling" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:212) was used due to the opportunity that presented itself during a mentor workshop in the Worcester in the Western Cape, presented by Prof. Ferdinand Potgieter to principals in this school district. The target population, who served as a pool for the convenience and self-selected sampling, were two district officials, seven principals and two deputy principals from primary, secondary and special education need schools employed by the Cape Winelands Education District in the Western

Cape Department of Education. As such it made no pretence of identifying a representative subset of a population. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the interview process.

Individual Interviews								
Interviews Prim Docs	School type	Sec=S Comb=C Hostel=H	Language Eng=English Afr=Afrikaans Setsw=Sts	Principal (P) / Deputy (DP)	Gender		Race	Date and duration
					M	F		
P1	Old Model C Technical	S	Eng/Afr	Principal	X		W	14/10/11 0:44:48
P2	New black (former white)	S	Eng	Principal + DP		XX	WW	18/10/11 1:19:49
P3	Old Model C Boys	S+H	Eng	Principal	X		W	01/11/11 1:14:14
P4	Old Model C Girls	S+H	Eng	Principal + DP		XX	WW	09/11/11 0:48:39
P5	Township	C	Eng/Sts	Principal	X		BI	09/11/11 1:04:37
P6	Old Indian	C	Eng	Principal		X	In	21/11/11 1:00:52
P7	Township	C	Eng	Principal	X		BI	22/11/11 0:44:02
P8	Township	S	Eng	Principal	X		BI	28/11/11 0:44:49
P9	Old Model C	C+H	Afr	Acting P		X	W	28/11/11 0:45:01
P12	Old Model C	S+H	Eng/Afr	Principal	X		W	29/11/11 2:01:58
P13	Township	S	Eng/Sts	Principal	X		BI	29/11/11 0:56:49
P14	Township	S	Eng/Sts	Principal	X		BI	29/11/11 0:59:33
12 schools			12 principals + 2 DP					
Focus Group Interviews								
Interviews Prim Docs	School type	Sec=S Comb=C Hostel=H	Language A=Afrikaans E=English	Principal (P) / Deputy (DP)	Gender		Race	Date and duration
					M	F		
Focus group interviews								
P15	Farm	P	Afr	Principal		X	C	05/11/11 1:26:43
	Town	S	A/E	Principal	X		W	
	District office	D		Official	X		W	
	Farm	PreP	Afr	Principal		X	C	
	District office	D		Official	X		W	
	Town Technical	P	A/E	Principal	X		C	
	Town Spec Ed	SpEd+H	A/E	Principal	X		C	
P16	Town	S	A/E	Principal	X		C	05/11/11 1:01:13
	Town	P	A/E	DP	X		W	
	Town	S	A/E	Principal	X		C	
	9 schools		8 principals +1 DP 2 District Officials					
<b>14</b>	<b>21 schools 2 distr. offic.</b>		<b>20 Principals 3 Deputies 2 Distr. officials</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>+15:15</b>

**TABLE 4.3:** Interviews (individual and focus group): biographical summary

From Table 4.3 the following deductions may be made with regard to the participant-principals and their representation in relation to the South African population. The table is organised in accordance with the Atlas.ti™ Primary Documents (P) and not in chronological order. In total there were twelve individual interviews conducted with twelve principals and two deputy principals as well as two focus group interviews conducted with nine principals, one deputy principal and two district officials, in total 25 participants. The first focus group consisted of eight members from the convenience sampling and the second focus group of three self-selected members. In accordance with the South African historical division of schools, the 21 school types represented nine secondary (S) schools; three secondary hostel schools, three combined schools (C), one combined hostel school (C+H), three primary schools (P), one special education needs school with hostel (SpEd+H) and one preparatory school (PreP). Language of instruction was three English/Afrikaans (Eng/Afr) and six Afrikaans English (Afr/Eng) schools, six English schools, three English/Setswana (Eng/Setsw), and three Afrikaans schools.

The 25 participants were twenty principals, three deputy principals and two district officials; whilst the seventeen male participants' included fourteen principals, two district officials and one deputy principal. The eight female participants were six principals and two deputy principals. Their race representation was twelve white (W) principals and deputy principals; five black (Bl) principals; one Indian (In) principal and seven Coloured (C) principals. It is important to note that in both instances where the deputies were asked to take part in the interview, the principals were also female. This may be ascribed to the notion supported in the literature (Eagly & Carli, 2008) that female leaders are more inclined towards participative and collaborative management practices. Although the researcher did not ask the age of the participant-principals, they ranged between 35 and sixty-plus. The time spent to collect the data stretched over a period of one-and-a-half months from mid-October till the end of November 2011. The duration of all the interviews was approximately fifteen hours and fifteen minutes and averaged an hour per interview.

It was not the purpose of this study to determine the reasons for social injustices in schools. Instead, this research was aimed at determining management strategies that would allow spaces for the effective realisation of social justice practices in schools. As such the sampling procedures reduced the problem of how to ensure that a sufficient number of participants would be selected from each stratum. The participant-principals had to meet, at least to some degree, specific criteria with regard to their leadership and management of social justice praxis as determined in the literature study. These criteria were disclosed to the relevant officials in both provinces ([Addendum A](#), [Addendum C](#), [Addendum G](#)).

#### 4.3.2.3 Criteria for the sample selection process

The criteria to consider related to the participant-principals and the location of their schools described in table format. Table 4.4 shows the link between the criteria originating from the

literature (column A) and how the criteria were offered in the letters (column B) to the Departmental officials and represented in the Interview Schedule ([Addendum F](#)). The overriding criterion was that these principals and their management practice should, at least to some extent, display management strategies that would enable social justice practices in their schools, and they would also have to meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of justice and social justice.
- Show adherence to and implementation of legal determinants of social justice praxis with regard to the constitutional values and human rights.
- Proven evidence of social justice praxis as equality, human dignity and freedom.
- Implement political imperatives (Manifesto on Values, Education for All).
- Acknowledge the need for fair distribution and educational transformation.
- Provide a moral basis for recognition, identity formation and social justice praxis.
- Apply a deliberative democratic praxis.
- Promote accountability, school achievement for all and social justice.
- Are in belief and practice embracing social justice as prospective and transformative leaders.

Table 4.4 provides an overview of the criteria and interview questions in accordance with the literature study. It indicates the theoretical underpinnings to this research, the criteria (§4.3.2.3) and how it links with the consent letters and the research and interview questions.

<b>CRITERIA AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LITERATURE STUDY</b> (Chapter Two and Three)			
<b>§</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>LETTERS REQUESTING CONSENT</b>	<b>INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b>
	<b>Criterion: Principals should</b>	<b>Letter to Departmental officials</b>	<b>Interview Schedule questions (<a href="#">Addendum F</a>)</b>
2.2 2.3	1) Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of justice and social justice.	An understanding of the concept of justice and social justice.	<b>Question 1</b> Ice breaker - Define social justice after having read the definition (not listed) What is your role as principal/deputy/HOD to ensure social justice in your school?
3.2.1 3.2.2	2) Show adherence to and implementation of legal determinants of social justice praxis with regard to the constitutional values and human rights.	Adherence to and implementation of the constitutional values of human rights.	<b>Question 2</b> All constitutions seek to articulate the shared aspirations of a nation, the values which bind its people... the national ethos [values] which defines and regulates that exercise, and the moral and ethical direction which the nation has identified for its future. How do you see to it that your staff and learners adhere to these constitutional values?

§	CRITERIA	LETTERS REQUESTING CONSENT	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
3.2.1.2	3) Prove evidenced manifestation of social justice praxis as equality, human dignity and freedom.	Practices of equality, human dignity and democracy.	<b>Question 3</b> Which management strategies would you employ to ensure that social justice practices of the basic human rights to human dignity, fairness and equality will flourish?
3.2.3 3.2.2.3 3.2.2.4	4) Implement political imperatives such as the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, and Education for All.	Knowledge of policy documents such as the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy.	<b>Question 8</b> I do not believe that social justice should command through governmental policies. Please discuss other strategies for the management of social justice in schools that you can think of.
3.3.1	5) Acknowledge the need for fair distribution and educational transformation.	That they are fairly distributing resources to all staff members and learners.	
3.3.2	6) Provide a moral basis for recognition, identity formation and social justice praxis.	Recognition of justices and injustices as well as identity formation in their schools.	<b>Question 5</b> Please share any positive experiences with regard to social justice.
3.3.3	7) Apply a deliberative democratic praxis.	A communicative democratic practice in accordance with the principles of <i>Ubuntu</i> .	<b>Question 6</b> Please share negative experiences with regard to social injustice.
3.3.4	8) Promote accountability, school achievement for all and social justice.	A culture of accountability for rights and duties/obligations of a diverse school population.	<b>Question 4</b> The principle of democracy is another valuable constitutional freedom. Which management practices do you encourage to ensure that democracy is part of your school culture?
3.4.1	9) Embrace in belief and practice social justice as prospective and transformative leaders.	That social justice is in the centre of their management and leadership practice.	
3.4.2	10) Play an important role as a transformative leader in the professional development of personal, staff and learners for social justice praxis.	Engagement with their own professional development and the professional development of staff.	<b>Question 7</b> Were you or your staff prepared for social justice education? If yes how, if no, would it be beneficial to provide such training?
<b>LOGISTICAL CRITERIA</b>			
	11) Purposively sought schools that were representative of South Africa's population.		
	12) Urban, township and rural schools, reachable by telephone, email and road.		

**TABLE 4.4:** Criteria, consent and interview questions according to the literature review

After the presentation of Table 4.4 a discussion on the preparations to enter and entering the field follows.

#### 4.3.3 Preparing to, and entering, the field

The presentation of this section hinges on preparation of the interview protocol (§4.3.3.1) and interview schedule (§4.3.3.2) for the execution (§4.3.3.3) of the individual (§4.3.3.4) and focus group (§4.3.3.5) interviews. Because of the initial decision to follow a mixed methods approach,

the basis for the techniques to be used in the qualitative research was established as interviews and possibly focus group interviews (§1.5.3.2). After the decision to change towards an authentic qualitative method only, the qualitative methodology was revisited and expanded on. This entailed that the foci would be on interviews and observations and not on documents and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2007:43). The two primary types of interviews were supported by observations (§4.3.3.6) of this ‘unmixed’ qualitative research methodology. In a sense we do research by walking (Merriam, 2012).

#### 4.3.3.1 The interview protocol

The interview affirmed the social constructivist-grounded theory paradigm that allowed for the search for and creation of knowledge that would inform the research findings with regard to management strategies for effective social justice practice (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:349-351). For the purpose of this discussion on the construction of the interview protocol and schedule, no distinction was made between individual and focus group interviews because the administrative processes and procedures were exactly the same (Smit, 2009). Before entering the field, Creswell (2009:181) advises qualitative researchers to plan their approach to data recording carefully. This entailed that the researcher had to plan in advance for the recording of the interview, the electronic equipment needed, and the procedures prior, during and after the interview. She also paid attention to microphones to enable clear recordings and a quiet, suitable place was found in the principals’ offices for conducting the interview.

On another level, the interview protocol served as a reminder of what, when and how to ensure that nothing was left to chance. Basically it was a form that contained instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and to make field notes of responses from the participant-principals Creswell (2009:181). This entailed that the researcher used an **interview protocol** ([Addendum E](#)) that contained the following elements:

- A. Biographical data
- B. Description of the research
- C. Interviewee consent
- D. Interview questions (Interview Schedule (§4.3.3.5 and [Addendum F](#)))
- E. Concluding actions.

In addition to the interview protocol, a structured observation schedule provided the opportunity to capture other relevant information for each of the participant-principals and their schools (Ibert *et al.*, 2007:184).

#### 4.3.3.2 The interview schedule

The interview schedule ([Addendum F](#)) served as a personal impression memo that contextualised a specific school, the attitude of the participant-principal and the ambience between the interviewer and the interviewee during the interview (Creswell, 2007:133). It served

as a reflective tool on the researcher's experience after the interview providing the opportunity to note observed indicators (Creswell, 2007:133). These included the attitude of the participant-principal prior, during and after the interview, socio-economic circumstances, venues, initial reaction to either written, email and/or telephonic communication, reception by the secretary/PR and the principal/deputy principal, cooperation and other relevant comments (§4.3.3.6).

The schedule stated the proposed eight open-ended questions and allowed maximum flexibility for participant-principals to respond to. These documents were also peer reviewed to ensure reliability by Prof. Willie van Vollenhoven and Dr. Herman van Vuuren who have done research in the field of human rights, education management and social justice pertaining to diversity practices. The researcher was privileged to be able to ask other colleagues, Dr. Corné van der Vyver, Mr. Michael Laubscher and Mr. Lappies Labuschagné, who provided invaluable feedback. The feedback was positive and only minor editing changes were made.

The recording procedures and attendant matters provide the means to capture data and are important considerations.

#### 4.3.3.3 Effecting the recordings of the interview and transcription process

The twelve individual interviews and the two focus group interviews with the participants were electronically recorded. The electronic media used were advantageous and made the interviewing and transcribing tasks easier and less time consuming (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:152). The researcher made and listed observations (§4.3.2.2) on the prior prepared interview protocol (Smit, 2009), completed and filed it for further reference during the analysis phase.

After the interviews, the transcription process had the following elements for which the researcher was primarily responsible: downloading of interview from data recorder to the Olympus DSSplayerPro Model, transcribing by herself and a third party, checking and rechecking the correctness of the transcriptions, affirming accuracy by sending the transcriptions via email and fax, transferred transcriptions to Atlas.ti™ coding the first transcript and determining initial codes, themes, categories.

In all twelve instances the principals verified the accuracy of the transcriptions via e-mail or telephonic conversations. Only one principal asked for corrections to be made to minor spelling errors and completion of sentences or indistinct words. Because of the transfer of data from one laptop to a new one, some of the transcriptions had words merged. This was not picked up before the transcripts were entered into the Atlas.ti™ Hermeneutic Unit, Social Justice, and therefore the researcher took the liberty to correct obvious spelling errors where quotes were used in Chapter Five. No other liberties were taken. Merriam (2009:110) also offers guidelines with regard to format such as identifying information and dates, adding sequential line numbers on the lefthand side of the page, line-spacing set at 1½. A clear indication of who asked the

questions (interviewer) and who answered (interviewee) were given, all of which were attended to in the transcription and uploading as PD in Atlas.ti™.

A broader discussion of and rationale for the three qualitative techniques were used, follow.

#### 4.3.3.4 Individual and focus group interviews

How do researchers conduct interviews? In this study, the researcher departed from the view that she would gain specific understanding and knowledge if she used a semi-structured interview schedule, but also asked open-ended research questions on what Merriam (2009:89) calls an “interview structure continuum.” These structures provided the scope for the questions and ensuing interviews to listen and understand what and how the participant-principals constructed their own understandings on the research questions (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:87).

As would be apparent during the interviews, the questions changed during the process of research because of the increased understanding on the part of the researcher of her own research problem (Creswell, 2007:43). This notion was vividly elucidated during the 12<sup>th</sup> interview where the participant-principal reacted not on any scheduled questions posed prior or during the interview, but purely reacted on the email communication indicating the topic of the research, only. This entailed that the participating principal’s story was not locked or restricted to the questions in the interview schedule but was wide, rich, and revealing of a principal who truly was a transformative leader. More on this experience will be discussed in the analysis of the data.

The researcher used probing questions in accordance with Nieuwenhuis’ (2010b:89) concepts. Detail-oriented probes such as what, why, where and when were used. Because these interviews were conducted in a non-threatening way and were not about determining injustices, the why questions in this research were asked to clarify and were not experienced as threatening. Elaboration probes to get a fuller understanding of what was discussed lead to more detail on certain aspects, but as was evident during interview 7, reluctance on the part of the participant-principal to provide more information sought on a specific aspect made the researcher to set aside that specific issue. Thirdly, clarification probes were used to ascertain that the researcher really understood what the participant-principal said on a specific issue and that she would not represent the information incorrectly.

Also relevant was the notion of “shaping” the narrative (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:43) as experienced during all the interviews in that the first one informed the following one, infusing what was important and what not, what would be the resultant interpretations and what not. In so doing this process also shaped the voices of the participant-principals, their ‘speak’, their stories that were carried through in the dialogue found in Chapter Five. The participant-principals were invited to use their language of choice (English or Afrikaans). Therefore the dialogue, their

voice, will be presented in Chapter Five by means of an English précis (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:43).

Most of what has been written on the interview as research technique applied to the focus group interviews as well. But there is more to focus groups than was covered in the previous discussion. The researcher recognised that dynamic reciprocal relationships were forged during the interviews, relationships that would influence how the researcher was to interpret the data. A focus group interview is regarded as a qualitative research technique used by an interviewer, the researcher, on a topic (management strategies for effective social justice), with a group of people who have knowledge or experience of the topic (Merriam, 2009:93), i.e. eleven principals, eight in one group and three in the second group, from the Western Cape Winelands Education District. This method of data collection is in agreement with the philosophical grounding of this research in a qualitative constructivist-grounded theory design embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology (Merriam, 2009:94).

The following guidelines for conducting focus group interviews (Merriam, 2009:93-110; Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:91; Smit, 2009) were:

- Number: eight and three participant-principals
- Confidentiality: ensured by numbering the participant-principals and on entering the conversation, he/she had to say their allocated number. Where it did not happen either the researcher or the participants interjected with the number (Smit, 2009), indicating their awareness of the ground rules and their committed involvement of being part verbally and non-verbally in the discussion
- Permission: the participant-principals, by taking part in the discussion, gave permission and indicated prior to the recording of the interview that their participation was voluntary
- Format: funnel structure, starting with a broad and less structured question of what they perceived social justice to be - allowing the participant-principals to become comfortable
- Interaction: the participant-participant interaction was amiable, relaxed, and indicated a reciprocal relationship amongst the participant-principals and the two departmental officials
- Questions: All the questions in the interview schedule ([Addendum F](#)) were asked and reported on in a more structured, but also more spontaneous manner. The researcher asked probing questions, allowed participants to think about what they wanted to add to the conversation/data and made sure that all the research questions were attended to. Answers were obtained pertaining to the primary research question.

The focus group, as was the case with the individual interviews, was not merely about words, hermeneutics, it was also about observations.

#### 4.3.3.5 Observing

Angot and Milano (2007:184), and Merriam (2009:120-121) recommend the use of an observation list during the interview process. This was done to ensure that a brief notation of the context, socio-economic background, setting and climate of cooperation under which the interview was conducted, was made. These notations also served as additional raw data from which this study's findings emerged. Contextual notes on these aspects were made prior, during and after the interviews on the interview protocol at the end of each interview. The purpose of the observation list is that it is advantageous from a research and participant view, that of a constructivist-grounded theorist. There was an explicit awareness, the researcher was actively engaged in the activities on the research site (Smit, 2009) prior to, during and after each interview, and she became immersed from the first to the last interview, having experienced a sadness when the interview stage was over. She gained insight, developed relationships and began to understand the reality from the participant-principal's vantage point.

With regard to the attitude of the principals and their willingness to cooperate, all eleven principals from the selected schools were more than willing to participate in the research. One principal was extremely busy, but eventually did take part. Only two interviews had to be rescheduled due to other appointments of the principals. The principals from the Dr.Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District all responded within a few days with the result that the researcher was able to make appointments and conduct the five interviews within two days. All the interviews were conducted in a friendly, cooperative manner. Heartrending was one instance where the researcher was offered tea by a male assistant and the care that he took with its preparation. This was not the only instance where refreshments were offered, but it made such an impression of goodwill that it needed to be noted as an instance of entrance into the lived worlds of the other. The analysis of the data also included some of the positive experiences shared with the researcher during or after the interviews.

In general, the focus group interviews were conducted amongst professionals who knew each other, but were strangers to the researcher (Smit, 2009). Therefore the focus group interviews were not viewed as natural conversations but provided valuable data on experiences and perceptions of professional principals working in another environment of the South African school system. Similarities and differences between the experiences of the participant-principals in both provinces will be discussed in Chapter Five. The researcher understood that group-dynamics do play a part in focus group interviews, especially with regard to the first focus group interview (Smit, 2009). Two of the participants were not principals but worked in the District Office, which officially placed them, in a hierarchical organisation, senior in position to the other six participants. It was however, no problem, and the researcher was not aware at any point that any of the other six participant-principals were holding back during the discussion. The collegiality and goodwill observed amongst these professionals was one of the reflective notes

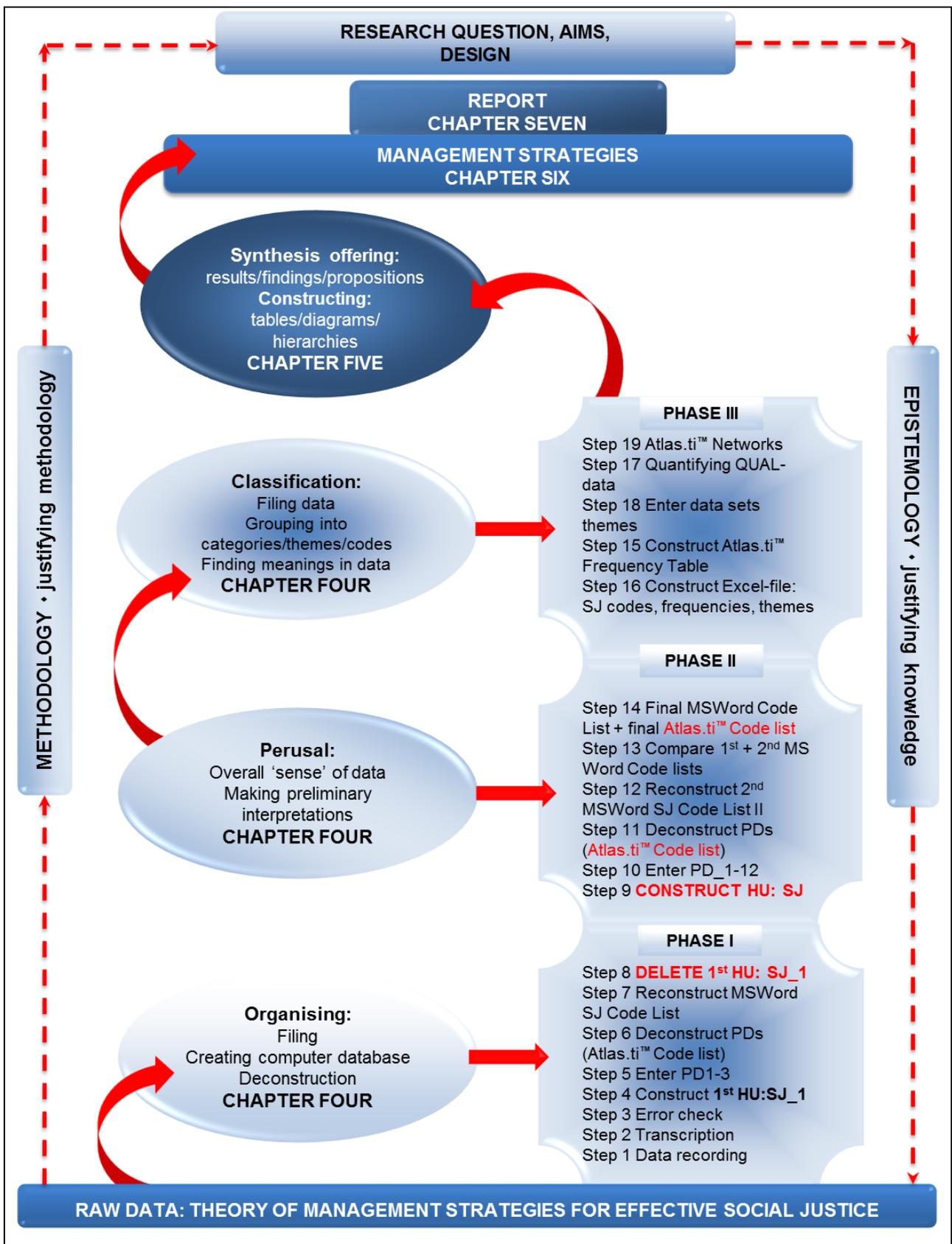
made on returning from the first focus group interview. As would be expected, some interruptions did occur during the interviews where the principal had to attend to urgent school matters. In one case, the continuous noise of building activities for a new school hall could be heard. All the interviews were conducted during the scheduled time of forty-five to sixty minutes. One interview ended quite hastily due to an interview to fill a vacant position. Only one interview lasted as long as two hours which had to be concluded due to the researcher's next appointment.

Having stated the research approach, data collection and methodological point of departure, the method of data analysis will be discussed comprehensively. The data analysis is presented in three phases, Phase I consisting of Steps 1-8 (§4.4.1); Phase II consisting of Steps 9-14 (§4.4.2), and Phase III consisting of Steps 15-19 (§4.4.3). This discussion ends with a summary of all the documents used to construct valid codes and themes (§4.4.4). The focus in this section is on the processes and not on the findings or interpretation of the data, which will be attended to in Chapter Five.

#### 4.4 METHOD OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Ultimately, all fieldwork culminates in the analysis and interpretation of some set of data, be it a numerically quantitative survey/questionnaires or qualitative textual transcripts (Mouton, 2001:108). The purpose of the qualitative analysis of this research was to examine, interpret and explain the data as it emerged as concepts, constructs, patterns, themes, categories and relationships according to the research aims (Mouton, 2001:109; Van Vuuren, 2008:210). In doing - walking - this research, the figure of Creswell's 1998 data analysis spiral in Leedy and Ormrod (2010:153) served the researcher, and her ideas of how she saw her research approach, design and methodology, well (Figure 4.3).

This process entailed that the findings of the qualitative data analysis were generated from the twelve semi-structured individual and two focus group interviews derived at from the chosen methodology. It was a process about ferreting out the essence and basic structure of the research phenomenon (Merriam, 2009:199). The grounded theory underpinnings are supported by a basic inductive and constant comparative analysis strategy (Merriam, 2009:175, 197, 199) which allowed the researcher to build a grounded theory based on the deconstruction of the qualitative data into manageable codes and themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Merriam, 2009:188; Mouton, 2001:108). The same processes and procedures were followed for both the individual and focus group interviews and reference to the one includes the other, accept where specifically stated otherwise. The qualitative data collection, analysis, deconstruction and reconstruction were done in three phases consisting of eighteen steps. The research question and aims the study of the scholarly literature, and the research approach (§1.2.1, §1.4, §4.2), concurrently lead to the specific methodology followed in this research.



**FIGURE 4.3:** Research methodology

The research methodology and resultant actions are explained in detail in the ensuing discussion of the three phases followed in this research.

#### 4.4.1 PHASE I: The first hearing-reading, Atlas.ti™ dry-run and initial code-lists

##### *Step 1: Data recording during the interview*

This aspect was extensively discussed (§4.3.3.3; §4.3.3.4; §4.3.3.5).

##### *Step 2: Data transcription process of the first three interviews*

As the researcher was herself the instrument of data collection during the individual and focus group interviews, she heard the interview(s) for the first time and whilst transcribing (§4.3.3.3), she heard them for the second time.

##### *Step 3: Error-checking*

This involved controlling for any misheard or misspelled words and checking the correctness of the transcribed interviews (Merriam, 2009:110). The researcher entered into a third hearing and a first reading or a **hearing-reading** engagement with the data.

##### *Step 4: Construction of a Hermeneutic Unit: Social justice\_1 (HU)*

The first three interviews provided the data known as Primary Documents (PD1-PD3) and were used as a dry-run to test the waters with regard to the use of Atlas.ti™. Saldaña (2009:21) describes Atlas.ti™ as superior for indexing functions of qualitative data.

##### *Step 5: Entering of Primary Document 1 (PD1) into the HU: Social justice\_1 and coding*

The first interview was conducted, transcribed, entered into the HU and coded in Atlas.ti™, a process that was followed with the second and third interviews as well. The algorithm thus created was: 'interview ↔ transcription ↔ [creating HU] ↔ entering PD ↔ coding' notwithstanding Saldaña's (2009:13) opinion that qualitative researchers are not algorithmic automations. This iterative process offered the opportunity for coding and theme building from the raw data. Coding was done by assigning a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute to a word(s) or short phrase (Saldaña, 2009:3) or what Creswell (2012:243) calls "segmenting and labelling." The researcher gained an overview of the context, the dialogue and the individual characteristics.

##### *Step 6: Deconstruction of the PDs into codes, themes, categories*

From the first three transcriptions (PD1-3) of the individual interviews, an initial **Atlas.ti™ Code-List/Code-Filter** was constructed. In accordance with Merriam's (2009:180) notion that the first code list is a fairly long list, this initial **Atlas.ti™ Code-List/Code-Filter** was more than fairly long and contained 232 codes. This required the researcher to use an analytic lens "for coding *is* analysis" and it is heuristic (Saldaña, 2009:6-8).

HU: Management Strategies for Social Justice Practice  
 File: [C:\Users\Idilette\Docume...\Management Strategies for Social Justice Practice.hpr5]  
 Edited by: Super  
 Date/Time: 24/11/11 11:28:55  
 Codes: 232

This initial **Atlas.ti™ Code-List/Code-Filter** provided the means to start grouping the codes in themes containing not only the codes, but also those phrases that made an impression and would be used to clarify the findings (Chapter Five) (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:371).

*Step 7: Constructing an Atlas.ti™ Code-List-MSWord.doc.*

Although Merriam (2009:180) suggests that the researcher will not yet know what will surface, this researcher already, during the interviews, was able to establish the broad themes as they came to the fore in the participant-principal's answers to the questions posed (§4.3.3.3). The Atlas.ti™ Code-List/Code-Filter created during Step 6 was reconstructed as a first Atlas.ti™ Code-List-**MSWord.doc.** or what Merriam calls a “master list” (Merriam, 2009:180).

*Step 8: The first HU: Social justice\_1 deleted*

This first HU: Social justice\_1 was hereafter deleted. The initial dry-run and resultant Atlas.ti™ Code-List-**MSWord.doc.** was beneficial in that it served as a first reading and sifting process that provided the researcher with the opportunity to get a look and feel about the content of the interviews that would feed into the analysis of the data of the other interviews. Most importantly this process served as a prism to guide the ensuing interviews.

A discussion of the second phase follows.

#### 4.4.2 PHASE II: The translation processes

Phase II consisted of the final qualitative data analyses processes (Figure 4.3). The steps in this process included Steps 9-14 (Figure 4.3) for both modes of interviews. Although the first HU: Social Justice was deleted, Steps 9-14 still flowed from the first phase (Saldaña, 2009:3). The whole, initial and final qualitative data analyses processes, were highly intuitive and deductive (Merriam, 2009:183) and started before the transcription or the analysis of the data occurred (Saldaña, 2009:16-17). The emergent themes were pencilled down during the research of the scholarly literature from which the interview questions were derived; these themes emerged from the initial Atlas.ti™ Code List (§4.4.1 Step 6) and during the cycle of individual and group interviews according to the interview questions. This process is known as structural coding where a segment of data relates to a specific research question that was used to frame the interview (Saldaña, 2009:66-70). The period in which these fourteen interviews were held spanned four months.

*Step 9: Constructing a new Atlas.ti™ HU: Social Justice*

After the first HU: Social Justice\_1 was deleted, the researcher constructed a new HU and named it **HU: Social justice** to develop the “meta-code” (Saldaña, 2009:44-45; 149-151).

*Step 10: Entering of the Primary Documents into Atlas.ti™ HU: Social Justice*

After the last interview was transcribed and the correctness verified via email or telephone, the first nine individual interviews were entered in date-related chronological order as Primary Documents (PD 1-9), then the two focus group interviews (PD 10 and 11) and lastly the three

remaining individual interviews (PD 12-14) (§4.3.2.1). The two focus group interviews were removed at that stage to be used separately as comparative data, but were added again after a decision was taken that the integration of all fourteen interviews should be attempted. The focus group interviews would be PD 15 and PD 16 (Table 4.3).

*Step 11: Deconstructing the PDs and generating an Atlas.ti™ Code list*

To explain this step more clearly it is necessary to discuss the process of data analysis in more detail as it involved actions of making sense - **translating** - out of text, preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper, with even more immersion to understand the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009:183; Creswell, 2012:238-243; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:372). The translation process started from what this researcher called the first hearing-reading (§4.4.1).

The initial Atlas.ti™ Code-List-**MSWord.doc.** (Step 7) served as basis for creating codes and themes and would constantly be expanded, merged or collapsed and changed as the analysis process developed through to Step 16. The coding methods depended on this study's uniqueness and therefore the analytical approach used was unique (Saldaña, 2009:47). The coding techniques used to attain the findings were epoche (removed prejudices and suspended judgements), bracketing and phenomenological reduction (coding and theme building-phases), and horizontal imaginative variation (divergent perspectives) that are presented herewith. These techniques lead to a structural description of the findings to this study (Merriam, 2009:199). Saldaña (2009:46) describes the following as first-cycle coding methods: grammatical, elemental, affective, literary and language, exploratory and procedural methods, all of which result in coding and eventual "themeing" of the data (Saldaña, 2009:139).

In the final instance this researcher used the three coding methods described in Chapter One and Four, i.e. open (segmentising) (§4.4.1), axial (relational) and selective or theoretical coding (core/essence/heart) (Merriam, 2009:200; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:107; Saldaña, 2009:151, 163). As a key strategy for the data analysis, the data were inductively explored in a process of immersion of gradual and ongoing levels of higher abstraction and theory (Creswell, 2012:238; Kose, 2009:637) (§4.4.2; 4.4.3). This approach to the coding processes was founded on the qualitative design of constructivist-grounded theory embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology (Saldaña, 2009:49). It enabled the researcher to immerse herself in the data by hearing-reading and re-reading the data gathered to get a holistic impression of the interviews and the emergent themes and was done according to **open coding, axial coding and selective coding** (Angot & Milano, 2007:139; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:143; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:376-378; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:107):

*1<sup>st</sup> Reading and analysis: Open coding* (Angot & Milano, 2007:139; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:143; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:107) of the data involved the textual naming, coding,

identification and assigning themes to the different phenomena (management strategies) of meaning as gathered from the field notes and transcripts. The focus of open coding was on wording, phrasing, context, consistency, frequency, extensiveness and specificity of comments (Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:105). The researcher was informed by the Interview Schedule's questions (§4.3.2.3) and headings in the theoretical section (Chapters Two and Three) from where the questions/themes/factors were derived.

The codes thus generated by an Atlas.ti™ code filter served as a basis to further develop themes and codes in MSWord ([Addendum K](#)).

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading and analysis: Axial coding* (Angot & Milano, 2007:139; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:143; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:107) entailed a review and examination of the initial codes that were identified during the 1<sup>st</sup> reading and analysis steps. The categories and patterns of the 1<sup>st</sup> reading were revisited to relate themes to sub-themes to answer the questions “if, when, how, and why” and where necessary altered (Saldaña, 2009:159-163). They were organised in accordance with causality, context and coherence.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Reading and analysis: Selective coding* (Angot & Milano, 2007:139; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:143; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:107) was the final step in the coding procedure and involved the selective scanning of all the identified codes. This step provided the opportunity to make comparisons, contrasts and linkages to the research topic, the purpose of the research and the central theme or key link' that might occur.

The three-phase coding process served the purpose of identifying segments in the data that were responsive to the research question (Merriam, 2009:176). The researcher frequently revisited the data, searched for words or phrases that she remembered were used during the interviews in both English and Afrikaans so that all constructions of the phenomenon would be captured (Olson, 2011:58). These coding processes brought about a 2<sup>nd</sup> Atlas.ti™ Code-List-**MSWord.doc.** in *idem* with the grounded-theory approach of this research (Saldaña, 2009:48).

*Step 12: Creating a 2<sup>nd</sup> and final Atlas.ti™ Code-List-MSWord.doc.*

This step entailed the creation of a second Code-List-**MSWord.doc.** independent from the first (Steps 5 and 6), compared and a final Atlas.ti™ Code-List-**MSWord.doc.** determined. The comparison of the two documents served as validation that both lists included the same codes, some just in different words, i.e. listen to the other side of the story/*audi alteram partem*, decision making/democratic, academic/teaching and learning, legislation/policy and others.

The Atlas.ti™ programme offered the use of frequency tables that would inform the findings.

*Step 13: Atlas.ti™ Frequency Table*

These tables were constructed and reconstructed throughout all three phases of the data analysis process. The final **Atlas.ti™ Codes-primary-documents-table (CELL=Q-FREQ)**

referred to as Atlas.ti™ Frequency Table, was entered into the Excel file and used to verify the correctness of all the gathered and reported codes and seven constructed themes.

It needs to be reported that at a late stage of the research one of the Atlas.ti™ files became corrupted. In fact all of the Primary Documents were obscured and seemed to have vanished. With the intervention of Prof. Seugnet Blignaut, who is an expert in the mechanical and software workings of the Atlas.ti™ programme, all but one were accessible again. The one that remained corrupted was P15, the first focus group interview. Notwithstanding this hazardous situation, the researcher realised that although it was impossible to read P15 in the HU: Social Justice, the data remained uncontaminated. She checked and double checked that the numbers in the Atlas.ti™ frequency table ([Addendum I](#)) were, prior to the mishap, exactly the same. She also checked the numbers in the table with the numbers provided in the networks prior to and after the event and they remained exactly the same.

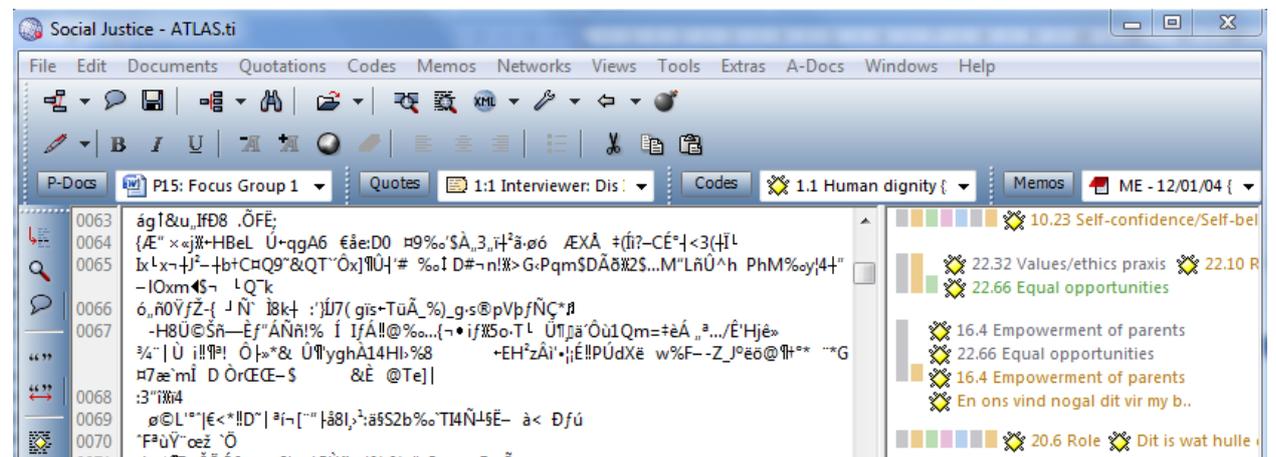
But the problem was that in the **Output File, Quotations for Selected Codes**, these quotations were what computer geeks call “squiggles” such as the following example:

```
½_0□tŸ_w[»_ušĂ: #]¶;32m
-Ecb□f_z~J_šÉZ»_z1 Ê&ŸB{rtqy×~îk²™H“©~ U“k{fâfñýĂ_1ñ6_C_3±F/.gïß}üD_>ò•ny$d±>_s{.¥W_6à_jÑ+□,\_~@”-
“_J”“Óé©t#9Ăi(çä.Ĭ.»ĬCýĂ°
•ŸĬMEi_~#uŰ äGĬÉ*drFŰ:$_W"gt_m~Ĭ;,+°5ĬĬM$QŌöiü <"_z°ct_ĈE□□äL?F_Š□fë„ŸB@Ó$°9_
jý_□sp□_z_q__r_•AĂêŽŰ&□4oĬ•JJê'?Đc}!d'of_:
```

Although it was unreadable, she resolved the matter of not being able to read these in the **Output File, Quotations for Selected Codes**; she was able to detect the following information in this output file:

**(P15, Focus Group 1 Breederivier 05112011 FIN.docx - 15:88 [jy moet ten alle tye die leidi..] (79:85) (Super)**  
 Codes: [20.3 Personal beliefs] [20.6 Role]

She consistently went about copying the few words in brackets such as the one above [jy moet ten alle tye die leidi..] and searched for that snippet in the MSWord document of the transcribed text ([Addendum M](#), Transcription Focus Group Interview 1). To show that the data remained intact, a snippet of the HU: Social Justice, P15 is provided in Figure 4.4:



**FIGURE 4.4:** Corrupted Primary Document\_16

The Atlas.ti™ Code-List-MSWord.doc. and the Atlas.ti™ Frequency Table were merged into the final code list and entered into the Excel file.

*Step 14: Construction of a merged and final code list in the Excel file*

This master list (Merriam, 2009:180; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:105) would be the pivotal document, the compass, used during the analysis phase. This process entailed recoding and recategorising to remain open to all possible theoretical directions (Saldaña, 2009:10; 81). The first page of the Excel file verifies the process of code and theme reductions, i.e. 278 codes were reduced to 207 and the 24 themes were reduced to seven. This final code list ensured that each code captured the same ideas with more or less similar codes, phrases and emergent themes. The researcher gained confidence from this binary process as the second process affirmed that all and more of the important codes were identified to address the research question.

**Column A** of the Excel file contained the initial 24 themes and 278 codes that emerged from the data by using an Atlas.ti™ Code-filter (Steps 6 and 11). These were numbered theme 1 and sub-themes 1.1, 1.2 up to theme 24. **Column B** contained the final codes and themes. Subsequent to deleting and merging 74 codes and/or themes, 207 codes and themes remained (DVD [Addendum M](#)/page Code-List). **Column C** contained the merged and/or changed codes. **Column D** contained the initial themes and their initial order. **Column E** contained the final seven themes and the order in which they were reported in Chapter Five. **Column F** contained the initial number of themes and codes; **column G** contained the deleted codes; **column H** the initial 24 themes, and **column I** contained the final number of themes.

The result of this process was that the original MSWord.doc. ([Addendum K](#)) containing the 24 themes were hierarchically grouped in a numerical order, i.e. 1-24. The merged themes were:

- THEME 1: [Theme 1 Constitutional values]
- THEME 2: [Theme 2 Define social justice + Theme 3 Decision making]
- THEME 3: [Theme 18 Government + Theme 19 Political]
- THEME 4: [Theme 5 Education + Theme 6 Identity + Theme 21 School type]
- THEME 5: [Theme 20 Principal + Theme 15 Teachers + Theme 22 Strategy + Theme 23 Suggestions + Theme 24 General]
- THEME 6: [Theme 4 Learner Discipline + Theme 7 + Theme 8 Learners: Extra-mural activities + Theme 10 Learners: General + Theme 9 Learners: Extra-mural Cultural + Theme 10 Learners: General + Theme 11 Learners: Leadership + Theme 12 Learners: Race + Theme 13 Learners: Conflict + Theme 14 Learners: Destructive + Theme 7 Learners: Academically]
- THEME 7: [Theme 16 Parents/Guardians + Theme 17 Community]

From these documents and processes of constant comparison and microanalysis, a deeper level of preliminary reconstructive analysis of categorical aggregation (Kose, 2009:637) of the codes and themes were possible. In addition to these processes the Atlas.ti™ Frequency Table also informed the final seven themes. A detailed discussion of how the researcher arrived at the order of the final seven themes will follow in Step 18 §4.4.3.

The translation processes were about the merging of codes and themes, and in a sense, their abstraction, a processes discussed in part in Phase II, but which will now be discussed in detail during Phase III of the data analysis process.

#### 4.4.3 PHASE III: The abstraction and crystallisation processes

Phase III consisted of Steps 15-17. From the first emersion in the data through to the last one, abstraction occurred inadvertently, but should nonetheless be discussed as it is from these processes of emersion and abstraction that new theories for management strategies for effective social justice practice will be determined. Angot and Milano (2007:143) hypothesise that unlike the translation process that draws from an existing measurement, the abstraction process is about the establishment of correspondences between the data collected and underlying theoretical concepts: it is about finding and understanding the hidden message of the data. It entailed grouping and classifying of data and acknowledging the role of the researcher as a component of the abstraction (Saldaña, 2009:8).

After all the data were coded the researcher moved between the original Atlas.ti™ Code List, the Word document and the first of the exe-files. These iterative processes produced a second page in the Excel file in which the results of the merging were captured. Whereas the first page in the Excel file showed the process of emergent themes, the second page evidenced the process of logical “themeing” (Saldaña, 2009:150) into a final representation of the data-analysis. The columns used to organise the data were:

- **Column A:** The Atlas.ti™ generated Code List ([Addendum J](#)).
- **Column B:** The number of codes per theme or sub-theme.
- **Column C:** Thematically organised tables built around the emergent codes and themes in the first page of the Excel file concurrent with Column A’s frequency table. The only alteration therefore from [Addendum I](#) was the reorganising of themes and codes and the numerical order of the initial Word.doc that changed. This reorganising was necessary to ensure that the rows were moved (dragged/dropped) to fit under each theme correctly and to ensure that no data were lost ([Addendum M](#)).
- **Column D:** The Atlas.ti™ Frequency Table ([Addendum I](#)).
- **Column E:** The Excel adapted Frequency Table.

The data and documents thus funnelled into the Excel file determined the final codes and themes. This data formed the basis from which the resultant new theory of management

strategies for social justice practice in schools emerged. During the process of data analysis it became clear that the questions and the participant-principals' responses were focussed on their social justice praxis which lead to one over-arching category, social justice praxis in schools which fits well with the research question and the title of this thesis.

The next step was quantifying the qualitative data.

*Step 15: Quantifying the qualitative data*

It was during the process of working consistently between Atlas.ti™ HU: Social Justice and the Excel file ([Addendum I](#), [Addendum L](#)) and during Step 15 through to Step 18 that the researcher became impressed by the value that the Frequency Tables brought to the findings, almost in the form of some kind of alchemy (Watling & James, 2007:350).

Whereas Step 15 gave the initial hierarchical ordering of the seven themes, the use of the Atlas.ti™ Frequency Table ([Addendum I](#)) grounded the final seven themes and sub-themes through a process of inductive analysis and direct examination of the data itself. This table not only allowed for a frequency ranking from highest to lowest of the number of quotations (n = 2069) per theme, but the final seven themes that crystallised from the three phases of data analysis were colour coded, a method followed through in Chapter Five of this research. Table 4.5 shows that the findings were derived at from the eight interview questions (Q) ([Addendum E](#)), linked to the seven themes and *petit récits*. The seven themes, questions and *petit récits* were derived at from the scholarly literature (§). Lastly it shows the number of codes and quotations per code and theme. It was this ranking order of the number of quotations per code that were to determine the order in which the findings were discussed in Chapter Five:

RESEARCH PURPOSE: EFFECTIVE SOCIAL JUSTICE PRACTIS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS							
THEME	Q		Literature (§)	Codes	Quota-tions	%	Ch 5 (§)
THEME 1: School principal (Theme 5)	2	Petit récits Q 1-8	§3.3.4; 3.4.1-3.4.3	47	495	23.9	5.2
THEME 2 Learners (Theme 6)	3		§3.2.2; §3.3.2	57	424	20.5	5.4
THEME 3: Education in general (Theme 4)	4		§3.3.3	34	359	17.4	5.5
THEME 4: Constitutional values (Theme 2)	5		§3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.2.1.2	20	346	16.7	5.6
THEME 5: Educational partners (Theme 7)	6		§3.2.3; 3.2.2.3; 3.2.2.4	24	234	11.3	5.7
THEME 6: Government and political matters (Theme 3)	7		§3.2.1; 3.2.2	7	125	6	5.8
THEME 7 Social justice: ontology and praxis (Theme 1)	8		§2.2; 2.3; 3.4.3	8	86	4.2	5.9
	1			197	2069	100%	

**TABLE 4.5:** Themes, interview questions, *petit récits*, literature, codes and quotations, paragraphs and percentages

- THEME 1 School principal (495 quotations) (23.9%)
- THEME 2: Learners (424 quotations) (20.5%)
- THEME 3: Education in general (359 quotations) (17.4%)
- THEME 4: Constitutional values (346 quotations) (16.7%)
- THEME 5: Educational partners (234 quotations) (11.3%)
- THEME 6: Government and political matters (125 quotations) (6%)
- THEME 7: Social justice: ontology and praxis (86 quotations) (4.2%).

The premise was that the researcher in doing qualitative research, was interested in understanding the meanings that people have constructed (Merriam, 2009:6) and therefore an inductive research strategy was used to allow the researcher to move from specific data to general themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:17-18; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367; Merriam, 2009:175, 197, 199). This process is one that Saldaña (2009:150) calls pattern coding that develops the meta-codes wherein not only code organising happened, but also meaning-making towards themeing during the act of organising the data.

This researcher is aware that the use of tables and numbers in qualitative research is frowned upon; it was therefore decided to defend its use. She will first argue that this method is supported in the scholarly literature. Secondly, the use of the Atlas.ti™ programme itself provides the means to use basic frequency tables to analyse the data (Step 18), which would be very difficult to do manually considering the extent of the data. Ellingson (2011:595) uses the concept “qualitative continuum” to encourage researchers to consider straddling multiple points across the field of qualitative methods. Without quoting Ellingson extensively, her argument is based on crossing the divide between purist/separatist thinking about qualitative and quantitative research and reification of dichotomous thinking to embrace a continuum mapping the field of qualitative methodology. Defending the use of positivist representations, such as tables, to understand and interpret the data does not mean that this researcher did not understand that qualitative research relies primarily on discovery, insight and understanding (Merriam, 2009:1). Rather, in using frequency tables to support her theory building she is *ad idem* with Kirk and Miller’s (1986:10) notion as quoted by Silverman (2001:241) “[by] our pragmatic view, qualitative research does imply a commitment to field activities. It does not imply a commitment to innumeracy.” Following this line of argument, Silverman furthermore states that by using quantitative data to support qualitative data, the researcher ensures that the whole corpus of data is presented and not merely selected fragments to support an argument. He believes, as does this researcher, that this method is therefore more persuasive than merely reporting a limited number of selected examples. In turn, the use of frequency tables enabled the researcher to engage with an intensive and comprehensive, although cumbersome, process of data treatment by testing and revising the data. In this sense the proper use of simple

tabulations can remove the researcher's own, and the reader's nagging doubts about the accuracy of their impressions about the data.

Other scholars call this form of data analysis a summative content analysis method involving counting and comparisons usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1283); a complementary approach (Chi, 1997:280-281) where frequency tables are used to interpret qualitative data, i.e. to count the number of times a word appears in a document or count the number of times a code is applied to the data and a kind of analysis that quantifies qualitative codings (Chi, 1997:311), enumeration (Johnson & Christensen, 2010), and a coded typology *grounded in the data* (emphasis added) (Ellingson, 2011:596). Ellingson's (2011:596-598) "qualitative continuum" use of the derived typology to sort the data into themes and categories "and then count the frequencies of each [code] theme or category across data" further enhanced this researcher's positioning of herself, her writing and vocabularies used and the criteria on the middle ground veering to the right.

More convincing than Ellingson, Hsieh and Shannon, or Chi would be to also listen to the voices of Glaser and Strauss (1967:17-18), who claim that there is no fundamental clash between the purposes and capacities of qualitative and quantitative methods or data. They emphasise that **each form of data is useful for both verification and generation of theory**. In discovering theory, the researcher generates conceptual categories of their properties from the evidence, the seven themes derived at from the data. The evidence or data from which the themes emerged were used to illustrate the concept of effective social justice. "The evidence may not necessarily be accurate beyond a doubt (nor is it even in studies concerned only with accuracy), but the concept is undoubtedly a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area studied. Furthermore, the concept itself will not change, while even the most accurate facts change" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:23).

The justification and logic followed in creating the Atlas.ti™ network heuristics are presented in Step 16.

*Step 16: Atlas.ti™ network heuristic and "trinity-building"*

The Atlas.ti™ program allowed the researcher to maintain and contain the extensive data and in addition also allowed for the construction of a complex coding system that translated into the frequency tables, hierarchies and networks (Saldaña, 2009:24).

The seven themes grounded in the frequency tables (Table 5.1-Table 5.7) and the network heuristics (Figure 5.1-5.8) emerged from the collected interview data in accordance with the open-ended questions (§4.3.3.2) ([Addendum F](#)). The inclusion of Atlas.ti™ network heuristics served the purpose of organising more comprehensively the codes around the resultant themes (Saldaña, 2009:13); it entailed transcending the 'reality' of the data that resulted in the specific order of the seven themes (Saldaña, 2009:11), and it gave a visual depiction of the themes. The network heuristics validated the frequency tables in that it also showed the frequency of the

quotations linked to each theme as presented in the tables. In the discussion of the seven themes, the network heuristics influenced the collapsing of codes and themes. In the final instance the Atlas.ti™ constructed network heuristics informed the reporting of the data (Chapter Five). This formed part of the rigorous and evocative analysis and interpretation for the research report (Saldaña, 2009:8).

Although this researcher did not know where to report the notion of ‘awareness’, but unexpectedly, unplanned and unforeseen, she discovered a pattern that she decided to call “trinity-building of the seven themes/spheres for effective social justice practice.” This awareness or discovery was due to the use of the Atlas.ti™ software programme and the technical ability it offered to generate network heuristics. Glaser and Strauss (1967:1, 2) refer to Merton who used the term ‘serendipity,’ which refers to finding things accidentally, that are unanticipated, anomalous and strategic, from which new theory is derived through crystallisation. This idea of serendipity is what this researcher described as a notion of awareness. After the umpteenth time of heuristically drawing, organising, redrawing and reorganising the codes in the networks (Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:109), she decided to use a clustering technique to group those codes that belonged together under one cluster code. This method of refining the data is advanced by Saldaña (2009:166), who sees this step as an operational model of the phenomenon of effective social justice praxis. The researcher heeded Saldaña’s advice to not only focus on the numerical value of the tables, but did indeed follow her own discretion in clustering that which the data revealed.

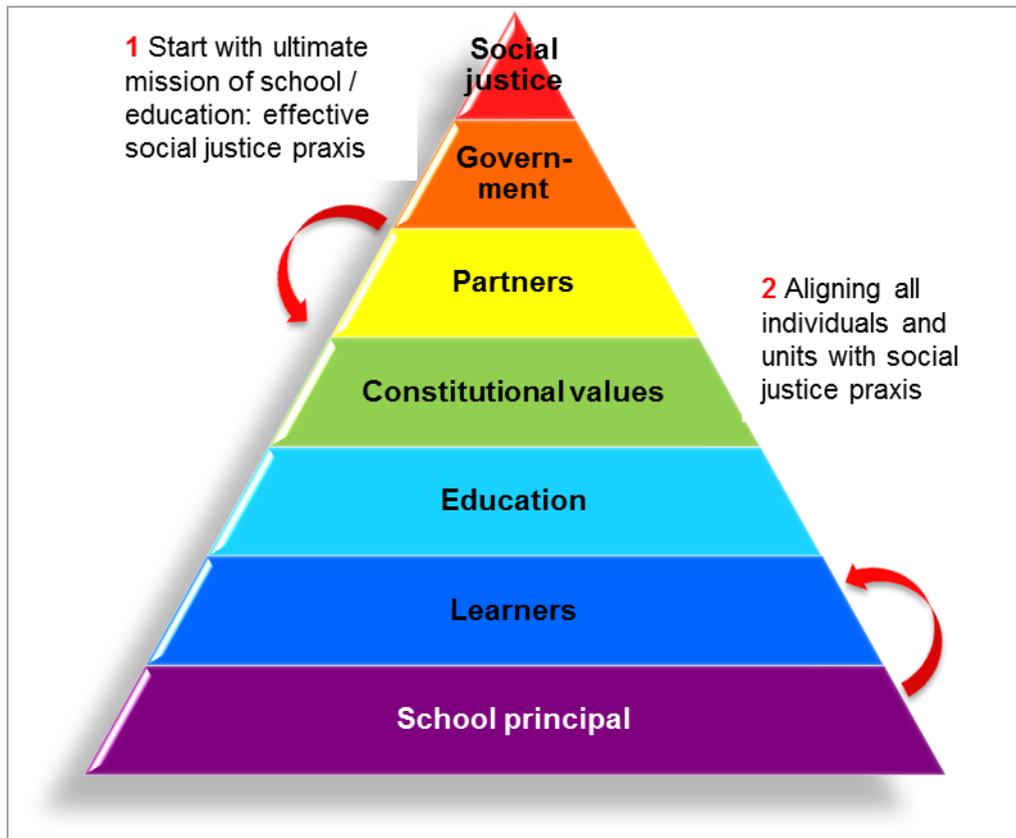
Creswell (2012:253-254), also after the fact, affirmed the procedures used by this researcher: she created a comparison table from the Atlas.ti™ generated code list and frequency table (Step 15); she developed a hierarchical tree in the Excel file presented in Table 4.5 (Step 18) by grouping the codes and themes in ranking order from theme 1, the highest number of quotations through to theme 7 with the lowest number of quotations; she then presented figures in the form of a pyramid (Figure 4.5) as well as the Atlas.ti™ network heuristics (§5.1). This was done in accordance with Merriam’s (2009:251-252) notion that although most reports of qualitative research use words in a narrative text, an occasional chart, table, or figure will enable readers to grasp major findings or ideas central to this study. Therefore the determining of the final seven themes of this research report should not be viewed as fortuitous because the specific order was revealed by the data when ranked according to the number of quotations per code and theme.

The last step, Step 17, is the culmination of the interpretation of the results from the coding, themeing, tabling and network building processes, resulting in the development of a pyramid.

#### *Step 17: Arriving at the pyramid*

Notwithstanding the notion of ‘awareness’ or serendipity (§4.4.3) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:2) the analysis of the data and results were grounded in the discovery of theory from data that were

systematically analysed. The empirical research process allowed the researcher to understand and interpret the raw data consistently (Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:101). It was also about progressing to a level of meaning-making of the data that entailed an analytic understanding of why the data offered these seven themes against the context of existing theory. This would reveal how the data corroborates with existing knowledge and brought about new understanding to the body of knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:111) (Figure 4.5):



**FIGURE 4.5:** Pyramid of social justice praxis in education

Creswell (2012:251-253) advances the idea of layering themes that builds on the idea of major and subthemes organised into layers from basic elementary themes to more sophisticated ones. In this sense the entire analysis became more and more complex as the researcher worked upward toward broader and broader levels of abstraction. Creswell's idea of themeing and the numerical order of the quotations per code substantiated assisted the researcher to understand the use of themes in a layered-qualitative analysis. The processes of translation and abstraction from Step 1 through to Step 16 lead to the construction and stratification of a pyramid of social justice praxis in education. This pyramid, based on Table 4.5 (Step 15), concurrent with the trinity-theory building found in the themeing of the data guided the reporting of the results found in Chapter Five.

Following is a discussion of the criteria of soundness with regard to the **data analysis** and **findings** during the data analysis phase.

## 4.5 CRITERIA FOR SOUNDNESS

McMillan (2012:302) states that in qualitative research, somewhat different criteria than those used in quantitative studies apply. The researcher understood that the data cannot speak for itself; it needed an interpreter who was able to observe the phenomenon of management strategies for effective social justice practice. She went about holistically to ensure that rigid criteria would validate the trustworthiness of the research project and applied “criteria for soundness” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:251) These criteria are presented as authentic trustworthiness (§4.5.1) which includes fairness, ontological and educative authenticity, catalytic and tactical authenticity, qualitative trustworthiness as resistance and post-structural transgression and qualitative validity as an ethical relationship in accordance with Guba and Lincoln’s positioning (2005:204). A discussion on the traditional notion of validity, reliability and trustworthiness (§4.3.2) follows and this section concludes with a discussion on transferability and generalisability (§4.5.4).

### 4.5.1 Authentic validity or trustworthiness

This study is in accordance with Denzin and Lincoln’s (2005a:24) notion that **credibility, transferability, dependability** and **confirmability** are strategies that will establish its truth value. However, Guba and Lincoln (2005:204) argue that a constructivist-grounded theory approach leans towards anti-foundational imaginings that would mean a refusal to adopt any permanent, unvarying (or “foundational”) standards or criteria by which truth can be universally known. Their premise is that validity in qualitative research is still valid but prefer to call it “authentic validity” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:207). They propose five potential outcomes of a social constructivist-grounded theory specific to this paradigm: **fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity** and that these authenticity criteria should be regarded as “hallmarks of authentic, trustworthy, rigorous or valid constructivist ... inquiry.” As the paradigm for this research was established as qualitative constructivist-grounded theory embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology this research design and its effectuation should also be measured against these five authenticity criteria (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:207).

#### 4.5.1.1 Fairness

Fairness was determined through the quality of balance in reporting all participant-principals’ views, perspectives, claims, concerns and voices heard through the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. Furthermore the researcher’s actions as reported in this study and its findings should test for actions that prevented marginalisation which was affirmed through the respect she showed towards the participant-principals (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:208; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:339). Her attempts ensured that all the participants voices were

heard and reported on and were embodied in the findings to this research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:451).

#### 4.5.1.2 Authenticity

##### *Ontological and educative authenticity*

The evidence related to ontological and educative authenticity was found in a raised level of awareness and reflexivity on the part of the researcher and the researched (Olson, 2011:17). The evidence of a raised awareness should be measured against the moral and ethical overtones throughout this study (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:208). It should also be measured against the viability and effectiveness of the findings and recommendations (Chapter Five) (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:451).

On a more tangible note though, the development of an interview schedule ([Addendum F](#)) for the individual and focus group interviews observed and ensured that the question items were based on a substantial theoretical basis from Chapters Two and Three (§4.3.3.5). This required that the researcher would critically self-reflect and explicate her own possible biases, background and values that hindered or supported the credibility of the study (Mertens, 2009). Self-reflection was also about an understanding of her own perspectives on social justice as it was shaped by gender, socio-economic status and other socially constructed perceptions (Olson, 2011:17). The researcher ensured that the research process was constantly checked to remain logical, traceable and clearly documented in a reflexive manner as the detailed account of the research process illustrates (§4.3; §4.4), which contributed to the credibility of the qualitative research findings as informed and sophisticated interpretation (Chapter Five) (Mertens, 2005).

##### *Catalytic and tactical authenticity*

This criterion relates to action on the part of the participant-principals and the involvement of the researcher in training participants in specific forms of social action or what McMillan and Schumacher (2010:451) call a catalyst for action. For the validation of this criterion, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven may not directly serve this purpose, rather indirectly the management strategies (Chapter Six) would enable effective social justice praxis in schools. It would be these management strategies developed from the ground up, that would offer new actions for effective social justice. The problem of subjectivity was not foreseen because this study was not concerned with injustices. Self-critically, it would be possible to argue that the mere resistance on the part of the researcher to engage herself with social injustices, could be read as a prejudice and could render this study subjective.

However, in her search for a defensible paradigm, she found validation for her notion of not looking for what was wrong, but for what worked in terms of management strategies for social justice practice in the Appreciative Inquiry paradigm. This paradigm did eventually not frame this research, but it proved to be immensely supportive to what she believed her vantage point to

be. The adage of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider *et al.*, 2008:xxi) that one can get much better outcomes if you look for the positive, in appreciation, to the participant-principals, than seeking out and solving problems, were confirmed in this research. It is in this light that the researcher systematically and deliberately appreciated everything of value and would continue to use the analysis to speculate on the potential and possibilities that management strategies have for effective social justice practices in schools. She believes, as did Guba and Lincoln (2005:208), that objectivity is a chimera because knowing cannot be separated from the knower.

#### 4.5.1.3 Trustworthiness

##### *Validity or trustworthiness as resistance and as post-structural transgression*

Guba and Lincoln (2005:208) also refer to validity, or trustworthiness, as resistance and as post-structural transgression. Briefly, they argue that research consists of interweaving processes and patterns in research as confirmed in the discovery, seeing, telling, storying, deconstructed text and re-presentations discussed in §4.4 and Chapter Five.

Other “transgressive” validities relate to postmodern forms of discourse theory: a personal incitement to discourse and a natural inclination to questioning and listening, trustworthiness as simulacra/ironic trustworthiness was attained through emphasis on similarities and different opinions, Derridean rigour/rhizomatic validity accounted for in this research where multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in the data representation and interpretation were evident in §4.4.3 and Chapter Five.

##### *Trustworthiness as an ethical relationship*

From Nodding (1984) came the wise words that the search for justification often carries us farther and farther from the heart of morality (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:209). Guba & Lincoln propose emerging criteria for quality that are rooted in the epistemology/ethics nexus. The criterion of positionality was reached through the researcher’s honesty with regard to her own position of being a teacher and lecturer, and researcher during the interviews. She shared her own subjectivities in that she stated in each interview that she believe that there are good social justice practices in schools and that she was not going to focus on injustices. She, in some instances, even made suggestions to become more inclusive than schools were already. She expressed her appreciation for quality and agreed or disagreed with participants’ viewpoints and during the reporting phase expressed personal judgements. She provided a voice in her reported text that has the quality of polyvocality which gave the impression that more than one voice was speaking at once. Her own critical subjectivity and intense self-reflexivity was found throughout the study whilst there was an equal and reciprocal relationship amongst her and the participants rather than a hierarchical one. Sacredness and profoundness with regard to how this research contributed to human flourishing were evident in the findings discussed in Chapter Five and the management strategies for effective social justice in Chapter Six. These two

chapters, more than the other two, provided evidence of what Guba and Lincoln (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:209) call sharing the perquisites of privilege that accrue to our positions as academics with university positions.

#### *Dialogic validity*

Dialogic validity, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:451), is about this ethical relationship that involved having a conversation or dialogue that extends the relationship to the public domain. In this domain the disseminated research results will be presented as articles in peer reviewed journals, conferences, professional development sessions and/or websites. From this research at least two publications were, prior to finalising the study, accepted: an article in *Progressio Towards a blended learning approach: a cooperative model for continuing teacher education* (Van Deventer & Van de Merwe, 2011) as well as a chapter in a book to be published, with Prof. Cornelia Roux as editor.

The next discussion is on what is termed traditional validity, reliability and trustworthiness that elaborates on aspects of the research process.

#### *Traditional validity, reliability and trustworthiness*

As constructivist-grounded theorist the researcher adhered to the criteria of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:204; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a:24; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:81). The researcher would therefore pose that **validity and reliability, and trustworthiness** was reached in accordance with the conceptualisation of, as well as the way in which, the research design was approached and constructed (§4.2), and the data collected (§4.3) and analysed (§4.4; Chapter Five) (McMillan, 2012:302-305; Merriam, 2009:213; Van Vuuren, 2008:204). These criteria ensured that the categories and themes found in the data were identified, examined and re-examined and presented for scrutiny (§4.4.2). Although a subjective opinion, the researcher believed that she was respectful, non-judgemental and non-threatening (Merriam, 2009:107). These inclinations, combined with an honest concern for the participant-principals and their voice created a respectful, but open atmosphere during all of the interviews, bar one. The mere fact that most of the interviews lasted longer than the allotted time and the discussion frequently continued 'while walking' after the formal conclusion, were an indication to the researcher that participant-principals wanted to share and elaborate.

Cohen *et al.* (2007:204) believe that one way of controlling for reliability is to have a highly structured interview schedule to which this researcher adhered. Although the very nature of a conversation/dialogical encounter is fluid all the interviews, bar one, followed the same structure.

An interest in social justice and the processes used to analyse the data are *sine quo non* with concerns for fairness, equity, equality and democratic principles of openness (Charmaz, 2005:510). Without paying attention to these aspects and thinking about the qualities of a good

society and a better world, and reflecting these in the processes followed, this study would have no trustworthiness, credibility or truth, how limited it may be. This study should confirm what Charmaz (2005:510) believes it to be: “[i]t means exploring tensions between complicity and consciousness, choice and constraint, indifference and compassion, inclusion and exclusion, poverty and privilege, and barriers and opportunities, and social institutions. Social justice studies require looking at both realities and ideals.”

The reporting of the research process ensured that the data and interpretations of the findings were implemented by working iteratively and concurrently through the research process (Saldaña, 2009:44-45). This process confirmed that the findings were true, valid and confirmable (§4.5.1). Girod-Séville and Perret (2001:25) state that **validity or trustworthiness criteria** would determine the congruency of the findings and its specific constructed reality.

#### 4.5.2 Credibility

Credibility was determined by ensuring that the research was conducted in such a manner that the research aims and question were appropriately identified and described (§1.4) (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:251). Credible, qualitative studies use detailed, in-depth, thorough, and extensive descriptions, described as “thick” or “rich” (Mertens, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2010a:81; Van Vuuren, 2008:183). In this regard the data analysis and internal trustworthiness measures (§4.3; 4.5.1 and [Addendum G](#)) were testimony to the fact that the researcher was extensively engaged, had immersed herself in the data and that she showed an appreciation towards all the information. It allowed for an understanding of the complexity and context of the site and participants. As is evident in the research findings (Chapter Five), **verbatim** quotes were included with detailed field notes.

Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 were evidence that the time spent in engaging with the participant-principals was ample. The data recordings that are included in this research report and the transcriptions also indicated the time spent during each of the interviews, whether individual or group. This stage of the process was about the narratives, the *petit récits*, that were told, and allowed for the gathering of data and the resultant findings from the transcripts. The researcher regarded herself as the primary instrument in this research, albeit in collaboration with the participant-principals. This entailed that she was solely responsible for the whole process of data-gathering (interviews), transcription (recordings, notes and transcripts) and analyses crystallised into clear categories, links, and themes amongst the data sets, almost prior to the data-analysis phases (§4.4).

##### 4.5.2.1 Member checking

The participating principals received a copy via email or fax of the transcripts of the interviews and were asked to confirm their correctness. They confirmed the correctness of the process via email or telephonically.

#### 4.5.2.2 Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing was utilised where a colleague(s) or critical reader(s) were asked to review the study for credibility and to determine if the findings seem to follow from the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:451). This required someone who was knowledgeable about social justice and qualitative methods. In addition to the promoter and co-promoter to this study, Dr. Herman van Vuuren performed this task. He is nationally recognised as knowledgeable about education management, social justice and qualitative methods. He was sufficiently detached, whilst the colleagues and critical readers reflected their own biases when giving feedback about the selection and meaning of categories, themes, patterns and study conclusions.

#### 4.5.3 Transferability and generalisability

The responsibility to show that this study was **transferable** is something that sits uncomfortably with the researcher. The aspect of transferability would be determined after the study has been published, but not in advance, a view shared by Marshall and Rossman (2011:252), who state that this burden does not lie with this researcher but with a researcher who might use this study in the future.

**Generalising** the findings of this research of a particular sample to the population, a mere twenty-five participant-principals, would in essence only be generalisable to that sample. As in the case transferability, generalisability of this research would not lie in the hands of the researcher, but in the hands of those principals, policy-makers and scholars who might use these strategies in future.

In order to establish the soundness of a study, the following questions need to be answered (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:251):

- How credible were the particular findings of this research? (§4.4.2)
- By what criteria can the findings be judged? (§4.3.2.3; Chapter Five)
- How transferable and applicable were these findings to another setting or group of people? (§4.5.4)
- How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context? (§4.5.1)
- How can we ensure that the findings reflected the participants and the inquiry itself rather than a fabrication from the researcher's biases or prejudices? (§4.5.1.5).

After the discussion of the criteria for soundness, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the qualitative data analysis process but not a discussion of the findings, which will be presented in Chapter Six.

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

The overarching theme of this research was to determine qualitatively which management strategies could be developed and used to advance effective social justice praxis in schools. The empirical section was based on the literature study and provided a functional plan, research approach, design, methods, and procedures, linked together to acquire a reliable and valid body of qualitative data for empirically grounded analyses, conclusions and theory building. These aspects, the literature study, research design and procedures, specifically addressed the 4<sup>th</sup> research aim, i.e. which management strategies for social justice praxis could be qualitatively determined.

The preceding discussion concerned the practical execution of the empirical research phase. It entailed a rationale for the research approach about knowledge claims in the qualitative design of constructivist-grounded theory embedded within a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology. The paradigm and methodology was the keystone for the use of the qualitative method. This research design and methodology entailed individual and focus group interviews and observations that allowed the researcher to explore themes and obtain insight into the perceptions and experiences of school principals in an interactive communicative situation. Stringent adherence to the interview protocol and schedule was maintained. The process of data analysis was addressed to show the hearing-readings, using Atlas.ti™ dry-run and analysis processes. These processes involved translation and abstraction, codes, themes and category building, quantifying of the qualitative data and constructing Atlas.ti™ networks. Thereafter the criteria for soundness included addressing trustworthiness aspects of authenticity, reliability, credibility, transferability and generalisability.

The following chapter, Chapter Five, gives an interpretation of the findings.

Chapter Six sets out and discusses the management strategies of effective social justice practice in schools and the recommendations of this research.