

**A SURVEY OF THE SPECIFIC
LIFE ORIENTATION NEEDS
OF GRADE 9 LEARNERS**

by

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“I delight in learning so that I can teach.”

Seneca (4 B.C. – 65 A.D)

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This is to certify that
A survey of the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners
is my original work

Christine Dalzell
Christine Dalzell

27 January 2005

Please note:

For stylistic reasons, the pronoun she has been used throughout to refer to the adolescent, although it is well understood that adolescents may be male too.

SUMMARY

Topic: A survey of the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners

Key terms: adolescence, domains of development, heightened vulnerability, life skills, Life Orientation, Life Orientation needs

Adolescence can be described as a period of heightened vulnerability. The transition between childhood and adulthood encompasses challenges associated with the changes experienced in the various domains of development. Risk and opportunity are associated with adolescence and education with regard to dealing with these aspects of adolescent developmental change is critical.

Life Skills Education promotes the acquisition of appropriate non-academic skills and behaviour that will empower the adolescent to lead a meaningful life. Life Orientation is South Africa's interpretation of Life Skills Education. This learning area is one of eight within the structure of Curriculum 2005. This study focuses on this specific learning area.

The aim of this study was to determine the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners and to assess whether the current Life Orientation curriculum meets these needs. The study also set out to establish whether the Life Orientation needs differed according to race and gender.

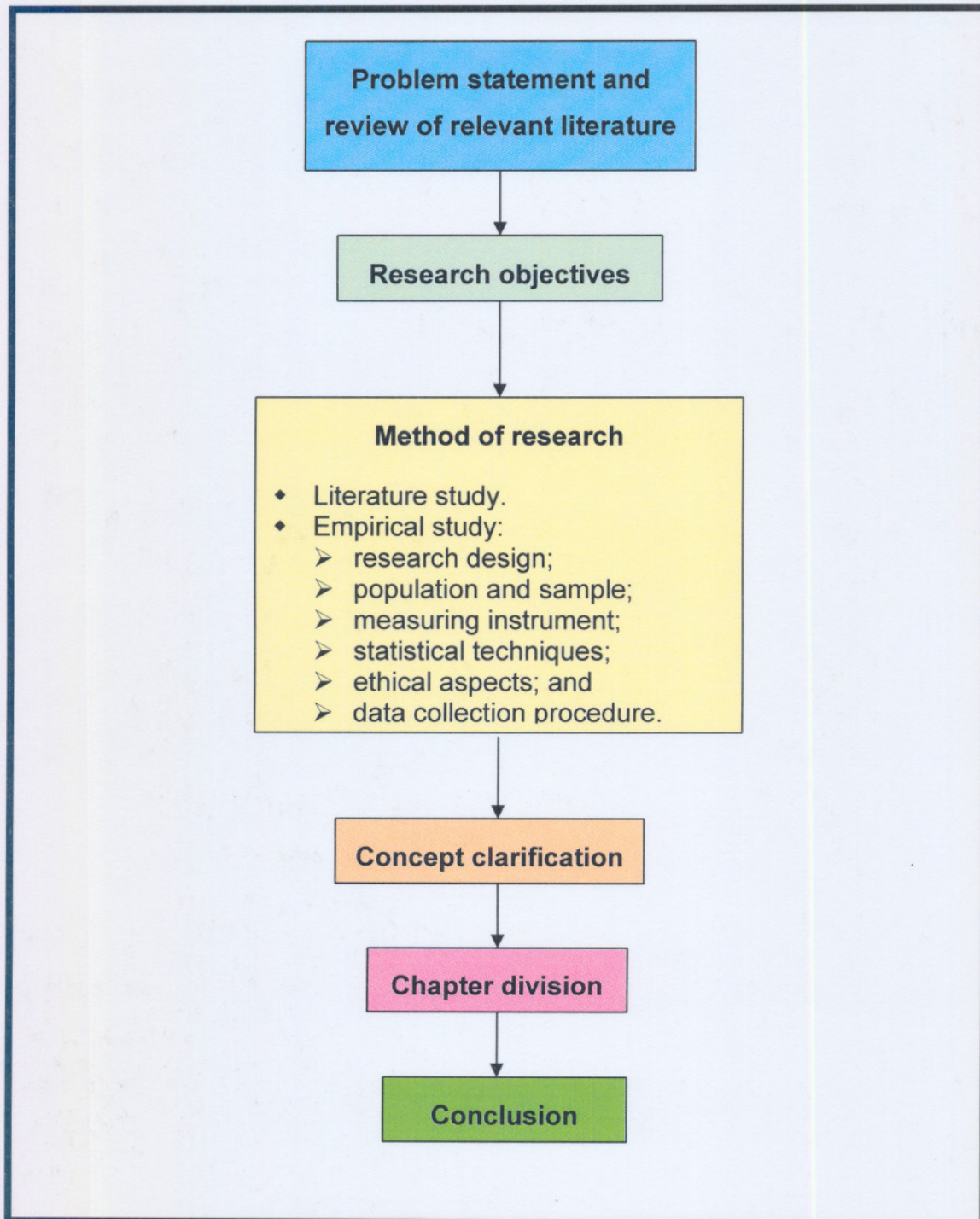
The research consists of a literature and an empirical study. Primary and secondary literature resources, as well as, the Internet, were studied in order to achieve the aims of the study. Information studied was used to design a measuring instrument in the form of a survey. This measuring instrument is statistically valid and reliable. The empirical study was primarily descriptive and quantitative. The sample population comprised of Grade 9 learners from two mainstream English-medium schools in the Vaal Triangle.

The findings of this study show that the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners in this sample are largely met by the current curriculum, although a number of deficiencies do exist and recommendations with regard to the relevance of the curriculum have been made. No significant differences between gender and racial groups were found. Furthermore, the Life Orientation needs are practical and future-orientated. These needs reflect the skills required to cope with the socio-economic reality of modern day life in South Africa.

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW



1.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the outlines of this study which focuses on surveying the specific Life Orientation needs of grade 9 learners. In this chapter the problem statement is discussed, research objectives are set out, the research method is explained and a division of chapters is given.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Adolescence is the most challenging and complicated period of life to describe, to study or to experience, as it is characterised by gradual biological, physical, cognitive and psychosocial changes that cause the transition from childhood to adulthood (Berger, 2003: 430; Frydenberg, 1997: 6; Thom in Louw, 1993: 379). All adolescents confront the same developmental tasks, namely adjusting to their changing body size and shape, dealing with their awakening sexuality, discovering new ways of thinking, striving for emotional maturity and achieving economic independence (Berger, 2003: 430). Attaining these developmental tasks and coping with the changes associated with the domains of development can be difficult and stressful for the adolescent (Gouws, Kruger & Berger, 2000: 2; Mwamwenda, 1996: 96; Adams, Gullotta & Markstrom-Adams, 1994: 6). For this reason adolescence can be described as a period of heightened vulnerability as the significant changes and complexities, which characterise adolescence in each domain of development, can sabotage adolescent wellness (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 5).

Despite the risk associated with adolescent life, it can also be full of opportunity (Berger, 2003: 431). It is thus important to educate and empower the adolescent to exploit the opportunities associated with adolescent development and to moderate the risk factors. The liberation from the state of dependence of childhood presents a number of challenges and risks that may cause the adolescent to behave irresponsibly, exposing her to a number of potentially hazardous situations (Pretorius, van den Berg & Louw, 2003: 1; Berger, 2003: 449; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002: 350; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 33; Woodbridge, 1998: 47). Therefore, the adolescent should be equipped with life skills that will empower her to lead a meaningful life amid

the stress and challenges that she will encounter during this period of transition. Such empowerment is facilitated by Life Orientation, which focuses on the inculcation of necessary life skills.

Life skills are the non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that are necessary for successful living and learning that enhance the quality of life and prevent dysfunctional behaviour (Junge, Manglallan & Raskauskas, 2003: 166; Rooth, 2000: 6; Du Toit, Nienaber, Hammes-Kirsten, Kirsten, Claasens, Du Plessis, & Wissing, 1997; 2). Furthermore, life skills refer to any skills that enable a person to adapt to and master her life situations at home, school and in any other context in which she may find herself (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 96). Although life skills are described as non-academic, these are skills that can be taught and subsequently learned in a formal setting such as the classroom. Life skills education is thus an important aspect of holistic education. Subsequently, Life Skills Education has become an integral component of the learning area Life Orientation which aims to equip learners with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for successful and meaningful living.

The education system, by means of an effective curriculum, can be instrumental in addressing the needs and risks associated with adolescent development. Curriculum 2005, in particular, aims to teach South African learners the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will in effect empower them to cope with the challenges of life (Department of Education, 2002: 1 – 3). The learning area of Life Orientation, specifically aims to equip learners with life skills that focus on health promotion and on social, personal, physical and career development.

Life Orientation as a learning area, in the Senior Phase and especially for Grade 9 learners, as this is a possible exit year, is arguably necessary and its importance in the holistic approach to education is indisputable. In order for this learning area to be valued by the learners, these learners should be consulted with and provided the opportunity to determine their specific Life

Orientation needs. This will encourage learners to assume personal ownership of the curriculum.

Bender and Lombard (2004: 101) specifically recommend that adolescents be asked to identify their life skills preferences. Muuss (1996: 82) asserts that the adolescent has relatively little to say about the curriculum and, should the curriculum become more closely related to the adolescent's specific needs, it would encourage individuals to assume personal ownership of their work. In essence, the nature of Life Orientation lends itself to the practice of consultation and collaboration and should therefore take cognisance of adolescent opinion.

Grade 9 learners have not previously been consulted with regards to their specific Life Orientation needs. In a study conducted by Marais (1998), the guidance needs of Grade 12 learners were surveyed. However, Grade 9 Life Orientation needs have not been surveyed. It is thus not certain whether the current Life Orientation curriculum addresses Grade 9 learners' needs. It is therefore important to assess the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners and thereafter to determine the extent to which these needs are addressed by the current curriculum.

The above information leads to the research problem.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem that is to be targeted by this research is:

Does the current Life Orientation curriculum meet grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs?

The above problem leads to the following additional research questions:

- ❑ What is the nature of adolescence, with specific reference to adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability?
- ❑ What is the nature and scope of Life Orientation?
- ❑ What is the relevance of Life Orientation for the adolescent?

- ❑ What are the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners?
- ❑ Do Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners differ according to gender and race?
- ❑ Are Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs met by the current Life Orientation curriculum?
- ❑ What recommendations can be made with regard to the relevance of the Life Orientation curriculum for Grade 9 learners?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this study is to investigate whether the current Life Orientation curriculum meets Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs. This specific learning area aims to equip learners with the required skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for successful living and learning. This study aims to survey what Grade 9 learners identify as relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to achieve this goal.

The overall objective can be operationalised by the following specific aims:

- ❑ to determine the nature of adolescence, with specific reference to adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability;
- ❑ to determine the nature and scope of Life Orientation;
- ❑ to determine the relevance of Life Orientation for the adolescent;
- ❑ to consult with Grade 9 learners to determine their specific Life Orientation needs;
- ❑ to determine whether Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners differ according to gender and race;
- ❑ to examine whether these needs are met in the current Life Orientation programme; and
- ❑ to make recommendations regarding the relevance of the Life Orientation curriculum for Grade 9 learners.

1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The envisaged research consists of a literature and an empirical study.

1.6.1 The literature study

Primary and secondary literature sources, as well as the Internet, will be studied to gather information on the nature and scope of Life Orientation and the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners.

Keywords that will be used to direct the literature study include:

- † Adolescence
- () Domains of development
- ☼ Heightened vulnerability
- ↔ Life skills
- 🔒 Life Orientation
- ☑ Life Orientation needs

The following table provides a summary of the principle sources covered in the literature study.

Table 1.1 Summary of the literature study

Theme	Sources
Definition of adolescence 	Among others: • Adams, Gullotta and Markstrom-Adams, 1994. • Berger, 2003. • Frydenberg, 1997. • Gouws, Kruger and Burger, 2000. • Mwamwenda, 1996. • Thom in Louw, 1993.
Adolescent domains of development and vulnerabilities associated with domains of development: ‡ Physical development	Among others: • Berger, 2003.

	♦ Gouws, Kruger and Burger, 2000. ♦ Rice, 1990. ♦ Le Grange and Lock, 2002. ♦ Pretorius, van den Berg and Louw, 2003.
? Cognitive development	♦ Woolfolk, 1998. ♦ Gouws and Kruger, 1994. ♦ Kail and Cavanaugh, 2000.
♥ Affective and personality development	♦ Corsini and Wedding, 1995. ♦ Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 1995. ♦ Schreiber, 2002. ♦ Levine, 2000. ♦ Kroger, 2000. ♦ Woodbridge, 1998. ♦ Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2002. ♦ Rey and Wever, 1996. ♦ Barlow and Durand, 1995. ♦ Wicks-Nelson and Israel, 1998.
👤 Social development	♦ Strydom, 2003. ♦ Ryan, 2001. ♦ Biven, 2002. ♦ Pretorius, 1998.
☒ Normative development	♦ Wainryb, 2000. ♦ Fern and Thom in Louw, 2001.
😊 Conative development	♦ Gouws, Kruger and Burger, 2000.

→ Life skills acquired in Life Orientation	• Gillis, 1994. • Stead and Watson, 1999. • Vaughn, Bos and Schumm, 1997. • Egan, 1998. • Covey, 1989. • Strydom, 2003. • Hahn, Noland, Rayens and Christie, 2002.
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1.6.2 The Empirical Study

The empirical study is primarily descriptive and quantitative.

1.6.2.1 Research design

An empirical investigation consisting of survey research will be conducted to gather information about the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners. Survey research entails questioning willing participants and summarising their responses, using frequency counts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 196). Information gathered from literature studies will be used to develop and design a closed questionnaire to gather information from Grade 9 learners in schools in the Vaal Triangle, under the jurisdiction of the Gauteng Department of Education.

1.6.2.2 Population and sample

The target population comprised of Grade 9 learners in English multi-racial secondary schools in the immediate Vaal Triangle vicinity, under the jurisdiction of the Gauteng Department of Education. There are in excess of 5000 Grade 9 learners in the Vaal Triangle.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 221) suggest that when the population exceeds 5000, a sample size of 400 is adequate. A sample of 445 (all Grade 9 learners from two public schools in the Vaal Triangle) was used in this study, as it approximates Leedy and Ormrod's recommendation. Accessibility to this sample was easily achieved as a number of mainstream secondary schools

operate in the Vaal Triangle and the researcher works as an educator in the Vaal Triangle.

The sample in the study was limited to mainstream Grade 9 learners in the Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging towns, which makes this sample a non-probability, purposive sample. To be included, learners needed to be mainstream Grade 9 learners attending school in the towns of Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging. The sampling in this study was therefore done without randomisation.

1.6.2.3 Measuring instrument

For the purpose of this study, a closed questionnaire, based on the literature study of adolescence, life skills and Life Orientation themes, was compiled to determine the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners. The questionnaire consisted of 51 closed-ended/multiple choice questions using a 4-point scale.

The reliability of the instrument was statistically obtained by means of the Cronbach Alpha correlation formula. The results obtained indicate that the measuring instrument is reliable. In addition to this the inter-item correlation of the instrument was determined and the validity of the instrument was established.

1.6.2.4 Statistical techniques

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus, analysed and processed the data collected. The SAS programme was employed to process the data and to determine frequencies and percentages. The use of t-tests to establish differences between the needs of learners on bases of gender and race were employed. Furthermore, the Life Orientation needs of the respondents were subsequently ranked from most important to least important.

The results were used to draw conclusions and to make recommendations concerning the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners pertaining to the current Life Orientation curriculum. In addition to this, the results will

determine to what extent the curriculum addresses the learners' needs as prescribed by the learners.

1.6.2.5 Ethical aspects

Permission was requested from the principals of the identified schools for the questionnaire to be administered to the target population. Principals were telephonically invited to allow their Grade 9 learners to participate in this study, the purpose of the questionnaire was explained and confidentiality was ensured. Thereafter a covering letter was forwarded to these principals, confirming the information discussed telephonically.

1.6.2.6. Data collection procedure

The following procedure was adhered to in order to obtain the data:

- multi-racial Grade 9 learners from English-medium secondary schools in the Vaal Triangle were identified;
- permission from principals to conduct a survey was obtained;
- appointment was confirmed;
- survey was group-administered with the assistance of Life Orientation educators;
- data were analysed and processed by the Statistical Consultancy Services of the North West University: Vaal Triangle Campus;
- the SAS programme was employed to determine frequencies and percentages;
- t-tests were used in order to establish differences between the needs of learners on bases of gender and race; and
- Life Orientation needs of the respondents were subsequently ranked from most important to least important.

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

† Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood (Berger, 2003: 431; Mwamwenda, 1996: 63). It is

a challenging and complex period of human growth and development characterised by rapid physical growth and sexual development, gradual cognitive changes resulting in the development of abstract thought, and psychosocial changes that alter the way in which the adolescent relates to parents, friends and society. Adolescence is recognised as a difficult developmental stage as it is characterised by the complexities and diversities of the adolescent's extensive development (Berger, 2003: 431).

Domains of development

A domain of development is characterised by the grouping of the facets that are involved in the development of a certain area of the adolescent (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 5). The domains of development are inter-related and inter-dependent. The following domains are identified: physical, cognitive, affective and personality, social, conative and normative.

Heightened vulnerability

Heightened vulnerability refers to the increase in one's susceptibility towards potentially hazardous and high-risk behaviour. Adolescence is considered a period of heightened vulnerability.

Life skills

Life skills are the non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour that are necessary for successful living and learning (Junge, Manglallan & Raskauskas, 2003: 165). These skills enhance an individual's quality of life and prevent dysfunctional behaviour (Rooth, 2000: 1). Life skills thus improve a person's personal competencies by empowering a person to perceive and respond to diverse life situations and achieve her personal goals.

Life Orientation

Life Orientation is one of eight learning areas that is taught from Grade R to Grade 9 within the framework of South Africa's National Curriculum. Life Orientation is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical growth of learners and with the way in which these facets are inter-related. Learning Outcomes are specified Assessment Standards, for each outcome is outlined in order to assess learner competency regarding each outcome.

☒ Life Orientation needs

Life Orientation needs refer to the life skills and Life Orientation themes that learners feel should specifically be taught in this learning area.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

A preview of the chapters is as follows:

CHAPTER 2: ADOLESCENCE: A PERIOD OF HEIGHTENED VULNERABILITY

Chapter 2 defines adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability. The domains of adolescent development are discussed and the risks associated with each domain will be examined.

CHAPTER 3: LIFE ORIENTATION: A LEARNING AREA TEACHING LIFE SKILLS

Chapter 3 will focus on defining and understanding the important aspects of Life Orientation. The chapter will also analyse Life Orientation as a critical learning area for the adolescent.

CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter 4 contains the research methodology to be used in the empirical study, including the problem, the aims and the actual research design to be followed.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the results of the survey conducted in order to determine the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners. A correlation between the results and the current Life Orientation themes will be drawn.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 6 will serve as a conclusion to this study, incorporating findings of the literature study, findings of the empirical study, limitations and contributions of this study, as well as recommendations for further studies.

Chapter 6 will be followed by a Bibliography and thereafter addendum of the survey and the covering letter.

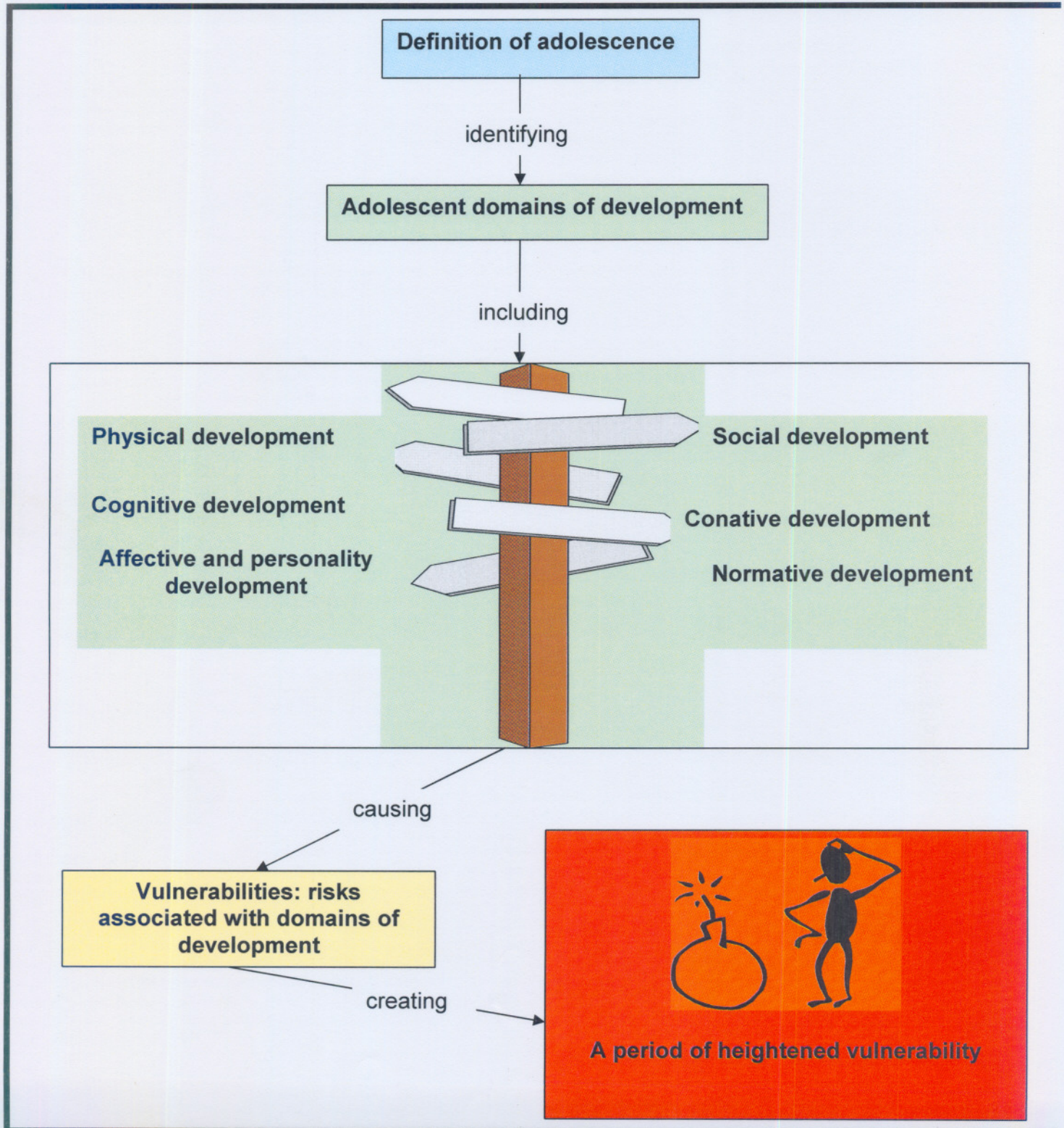
1.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an overview of what this study entails was clarified. In the following chapter adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

ADOLESCENCE: A PERIOD OF HEIGHTENED VULNERABILITY

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW



This chapter aims at presenting and addressing the following questions:

- How does one define and interpret adolescence as a life stage?
- In which domains of development does the adolescent experience developmental changes in order to make the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- In what way do these developmental changes in these various domains cause heightened vulnerability in the adolescent?

2.2 DEFINING ADOLESCENCE AS A LIFE STAGE

Adolescence can be defined by its Latin root word *adolescere* which means 'to grow up' or 'to grow to adulthood' (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 2; Thom in Louw, 1993: 377). The life stage of adolescence can be described as a fascinating, challenging and complex period of human growth and development. It sees the adolescent move from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood (Abrahams, Creighton, Naidoo, Pillay & Wegner, 2002: 2; Mwamwenda, 1996: 63; Adams, Gullotta & Markstrom-Adams, 1994: 5). This transition is thus a period of gradual change, experimentation and preparation for what is to come (Berger, 2003: 431; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 2; Adams *et al.*, 1994:5; Thom in Louw, 1993: 377).

According to Berger (2003: 430) and Amon (2002: 143), adolescence is the most challenging and complicated period of life to describe, to study or to experience. Adolescence is recognised as a difficult developmental stage because it is characterised by the complexities and diversities of the adolescent's extensive physical, cognitive, social and psychological development. Furthermore, the child is developing psychologically and in ways that define intellectual, social, spiritual and emotional characteristics. Therefore it is understood that the adolescent will face changes that will cause difficulties and stress, as well as excitement and growth (Berger, 2003: 431, Adams *et al.*, 1994: 6; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 2; Mwamwenda, 1996: 63; Frydenberg, 1997: 6; Thom in Louw, 1993: 377).

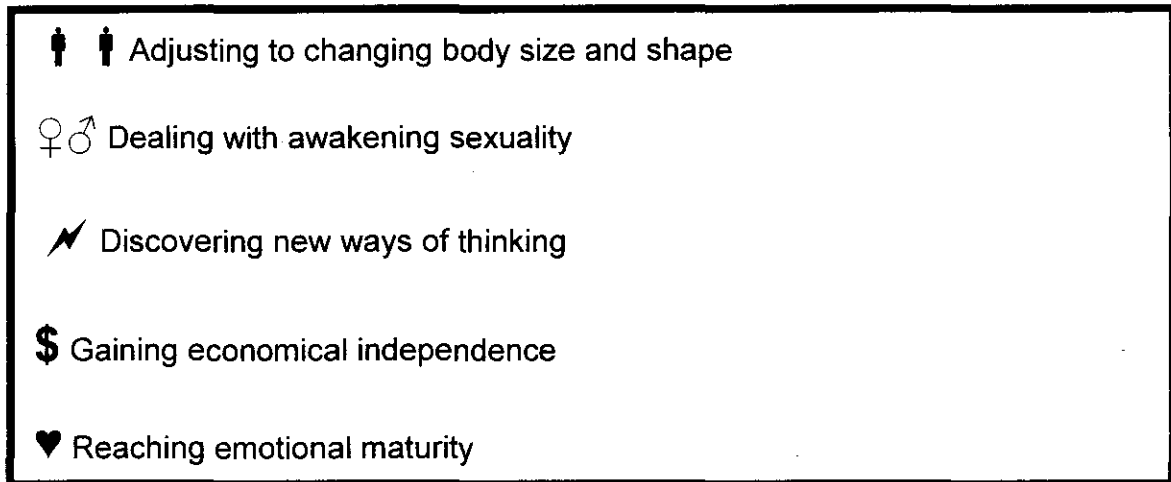
Adolescence is a period of transition where humans cross the great divide between childhood and adulthood (Berger, 2003: 431). Demarcating ages of onset and of conclusion to this period is difficult as adolescents need to be understood in their totality as individuals. In this sense they are regarded as complex beings who are experiencing physical, intellectual, emotional and social changes at different rates and at different times to one another (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 4; Mwamwenda, 1996: 69). In other words, adolescence is more than just a chronological period. Thom in Louw (1993: 377) suggests that it is better to determine the various developmental stages of adolescence on the basis of specific developmental changes rather than on the basis of age.

Berger (2003: 432) and Thom in Louw (1993: 377) state that adolescence starts when physical changes of puberty transform a childish body into an adult one – when rapid physical growth begins, reproductive organs begin to function and sexual characteristics appear. Then gradual cognitive changes occur that enable the young person to move beyond concrete thought to more abstract reasoning. Concomitant to these developments are the psychosocial changes that involve and alter the way in which the adolescent relates to parents, friends and society.

The end of this life stage is not indicated by clear characteristics. However, it can be viewed from different perspectives through concomitant developmental benchmarks (Thom in Louw, 1993: 377). From a social point of view, adolescence ends when the person begins to fulfill adult roles and is independent and self-sufficient. The psychological perspective indicates that adolescence has ended when the person is reasonably certain of her identity, has developed a value system and is capable of establishing adult relationships. The legal point of view states that an adolescent becomes an adult when she does not need parental permission and can be held responsible for contractual obligations (age 21). Culturally prescribed norms with rituals and ceremonies mark the end of adolescence in some cultures, and the importance of this perspective should not be disregarded.

The following figure summarises the developmental tasks adolescents are required to ensure that adulthood has been reached.

Figure 2.1 The developmental tasks that adolescents confront



2.3 ADOLESCENT DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT

A domain of development is characterised by grouping facets that are involved in the development of a certain area of the adolescent. These domains are interrelated and interdependent; developments or problems experienced in one domain influences those in others. The heightened risk of adolescence is characterised by the significant changes and complexities as experienced in each domain during this period of development (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 5 - 6). The domains of becoming are:

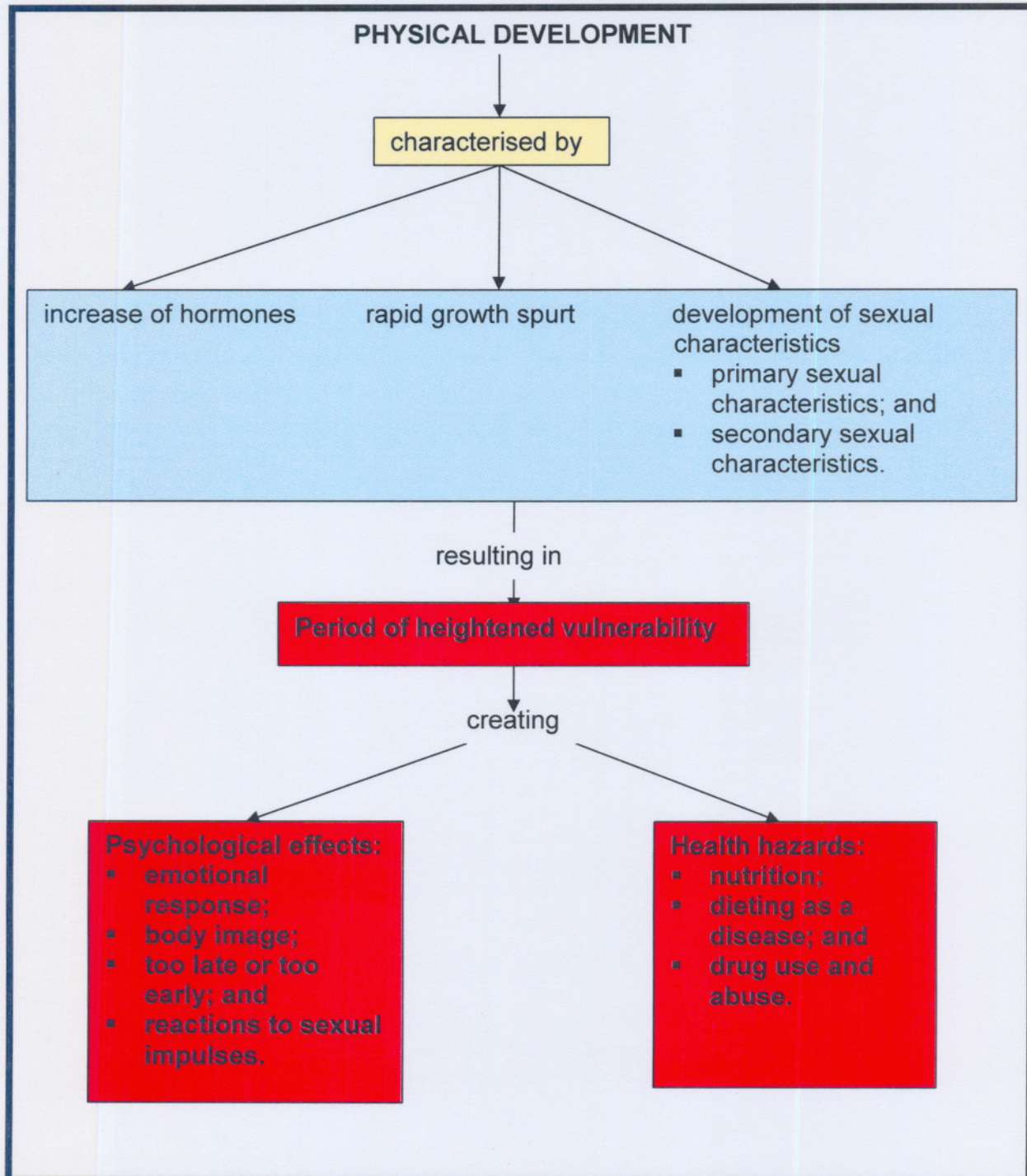
- ♂ Physical development
- ? Cognitive development
- ♥ Affective development
- 👤 Social development
- 😊 Conative development
- ☒ Normative development

Each domain will be discussed individually.

2.3.1 The Domain of Physical Development

Physical development can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2.2 The domain of physical development



The onset of puberty signifies the onset of adolescence (Berger, 2003: 497; Thom in Louw, 1993: 383). The external physical developments and internal physiological developments that occur during the first few years of

adolescence can be experienced with a sense of wonder, pride and joy, but also with uncertainty, shame and aversion (Thom in Louw, 1993: 383). The normative biological changes of adolescence (rise of hormone levels, rapid physical growth, the new body shape and size, and sexual maturation) will be outlined below.

2.3.1.1 Hormones

The cascade of hormones caused by puberty allows for the visible changes that transform the childish body into that of an adult - the rise of hormone levels during puberty directly influences the physical development of the adolescent (Berger, 2003: 432; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 9; Rice, 1990: 118).

Berger (2003: 432) and Rice (1990: 118) explain that a biochemical signal from the hypothalamus is sent to the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland then produces hormones that stimulate the adrenal glands, which are positioned above the kidneys on either side. This route of hypothalamus → pituitary gland → adrenal glands (HPA axis) is followed by many kinds of hormones that regulate various physiological activities. These activities include stress, sleep, growth, appetite, sexual excitement and changes in the body.

The pituitary gland will then activate the gonads, which are the sex glands – in females the ovaries and in males the testicles – these are the first to enlarge. The GnRH (gonadotropin) releases a hormone that causes the gonad to increase the sex hormones estrogen and testosterone dramatically. Both males and females experience an increase in the hormones. However, males will have a surge of testosterone while the females will have a surge of estrogen. This increase in hormones loops back to the hypothalamus and pituitary gland which then produces the growth hormone and more GnRH and causes the adrenal glands and gonads to produce more sex hormones.

The biological effect of these biochemical changes is far-reaching and is the cause of the physical transformation of the adolescent.

2.3.1.2 The growth spurt

Gouws *et al.* (2000: 13) explain that the growth acceleration occurring during adolescence is typical of the pubescent period and the onset of puberty. The sequence of growth remains the same for all adolescents. However, the rate or pace of change varies from individual to individual. Furthermore, the changes are not rapid, but pervasive, and the three to four years before the anatomy reaches close to adult size can seem like an eternity to the adolescent (Berger, 2003: 436).

During adolescence the growth spurt is influenced by genetic, endocrine (the secretion of growth hormones), environmental and emotional factors (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 13; Thom in Louw, 1993: 387). The growth spurt is sudden, uneven, unpredictable and affects practically all skeletal and muscular dimensions (Berger, 2003: 436; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 13). The growth proceeds from the extremities to the core, meaning that the torso is the last part to grow. The awkwardness and clumsiness experienced by the adolescent is thus as a result of their hands and feet, then arms and legs growing disproportionately to the rest of their body (Berger, 2003: 436; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 13; Thom in Louw, 1993: 387).

In order to cope with growth, the adolescent experiences an increase in appetite and therefore an increase in energy to grow, resulting in an increase in weight and muscle. The pudginess and clumsiness begins to disappear and the body takes on an adult form – in girls, the body contours become more rounded and in boys, contours become more angular. During this time the head and facial features take on their final form – the lips, ears and nose grow before the skull itself becomes larger and more oval (Berger, 2003: 436; Thom in Louw, 1993: 387).

Berger (2003: 436) explains that the internal organs, such as the heart and lungs, also grow and that the blood flow increases. This increases the adolescents' physical endurance, as well as their need to sleep. The adolescents' diurnal cycles are also influenced; they tend to sleep during the

day and are awake at night. The lymphoid system decreases, while the oil, sweat and odour glands become more active.

The adolescents' bodily functions and appearance will never be the same again and one of the main manifestations of these changes in the child's body is the development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics.

2.3.1.3 Sexual characteristics

Adolescence has been described as a period of sexual maturation – the transformation of boys into men and girls into women. The primary sexual characteristics are directly involved in reproductive functions, while the secondary sexual characteristics concern sexual appearance (Berger, 2003: 439; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 14).

□ Primary sexual characteristics

Berger (2003: 439) and Gouws *et al.* (2000: 15) explain that during adolescence, the primary sex organs become larger - in girls the ovaries and uterus grow while the vaginal lining thickens, and in boys the testes, scrotum and penis enlarge. Menarche (the menstrual period) and spermatarche (the production of live sperm) indicate sexual maturation (Berger, 2003: 439; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 15). Berger (2003: 439) states that in modern society, menarche and spermatarche occur at a younger age than before, suggesting that adolescents face sexual maturity at a younger age.

□ Secondary sexual characteristics

The secondary sexual characteristics relate to the body characteristics that are not directly involved in reproduction, but that indicate sexual maturity. These include body shape, female breasts, male facial hair, armpit and pubic hair and changes in skin texture and voice (Berger, 2003: 439; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 14; Rice, 1990: 134).

The male body shape is different from that of the female – males are generally taller and have wider shoulders, while females carry more body fat and have wider hips for childbearing (Berger, 2003: 439).

According to Berger (2003: 440) and Gouws *et al.* (2000: 15), the diameter of the areola (dark area around the nipple), as well as the size of the breast, increases in both genders. However, the female breasts gradually enlarge until they are rounded and the changes of puberty are complete. The males' experience of increased breast size is temporary and should not cause concern.

A change in body hair becomes evident in adolescence, existing hair on the head, arms and legs grows darker. In males, facial and chest hair grow, and both genders experience the growth of armpit and pubic hair (Berger, 2003: 440; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 15; Rice, 1990:135). While the male adolescent is generally pleased with these developments, the female adolescent is generally eager to remove evidence of such development.

The adolescent will experience a change in skin texture during adolescence as the skin becomes courser and oilier. This is caused by the sebaceous glands that secrete an oily substance that can cause acne in both genders (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 14).

Both male and female adolescents' voices deepen, mainly due to the growth of the larynx and especially in boys, due to the production of male hormones (Berger, 2003: 440; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 14). In addition to this, the "Adam's apple" becomes visible in the male (Berger, 2003: 440; Rice, 1990: 136).

Adolescents are acutely aware of the physical changes they experience (Thom in Louw, 1993: 387). Their response to these changes can be either positive or negative or a combination thereof, depending on the individual and how the physical changes conform (or not) to cultural stereotypes. Therefore this domain of development can heighten the adolescent's vulnerability.

2.3.1.4 Heightened vulnerability – the psychological effects of the adolescent's physical changes

Thom in Louw (1993: 387) explains that in order to form an identity, the adolescent has to integrate the physical changes into her existing identity to form a unified whole and she also needs to maintain a feeling of continuity: that she is the same person. These changes can create a sense of heightened vulnerability in the adolescent – even though she is the same person, her body looks, feels and moves differently.

■ Emotional response to physical growth

According to Berger (2003), adolescence is a time of moodiness, emotions, anger and turbulence as the increase of hormones surging through the body results in heightened experiences. An increase in testosterone levels influences the arousal of emotions, while the increase of other hormones causes rapid shifts in emotional extremes. The ebb and flow during girls' menstrual cycles produce mood changes, while the boys' hormones influence thoughts of sex and masturbation (Berger, 2003: 441; Rice, 1990: 125). The responses to the biochemical activity are erratic and powerful, and because they are less familiar, they are also less controlled.

Berger (2003: 442) suggests that the social context of the adolescent also plays a role in the adolescent's emotional response to the physical changes. Adults and other teenagers react to the biological signs caused by increased hormonal levels. The social reaction is what triggers the moods and reactions. As the adolescent reacts to the perceptions of her peers, her reaction influences her self-concept and she perceives her own body image accordingly.

■ Body image

The adolescent's body image is associated with her sense of own worth and is determined by her experience of how others see her (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 22). Therefore body image refers to the perception of the adolescent of her own body and of how her body appears. Very few adolescents are satisfied with their physiques and the negative self-appraisal has a major impact on the

adolescent's self-concept and personality development (Berger, 2003: 442; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 22; Rice, 1990: 148). This is also true for the adolescent who is satisfied with her development and has a positive body image and self-esteem. Self-examination is based on peers' development and on what society prescribes. If the development of the adolescent's body does not conform to that of her peers or to what society prescribes, she could experience her body as unattractive and unacceptable, which may result in a negative emotional response to her physical development. By contrast, should she experience a positive body image, her emotional response to these changes will also be positive (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 24).

The age at which the adolescent reaches physical maturity will also have an effect on self-appraisal and body image. Early and late developers will thus respond differently to their physical development.

■ Too early or too late

Few adolescents mature at exactly the same rate and time as their peers (Berger, 2003: 444; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 24; Mwamwenda, 1996: 69; Thom in Louw, 1993: 388;). Physical maturity has an effect on the individual's psychological and social development, as those who achieve early maturation are expected to respond as adults, while those who mature later are treated as children (Thom in Louw, 1993: 388).

For the early developer (both boys and girls), the benefits are evident: they are physically stronger, often better at sport, more confident, have a good body image and are held in esteem by their peers, therefore earning leadership positions (Thom in Louw, 1993: 388). However, in girls, heightened vulnerability surfaces as described by Berger (2003: 444) and Gouws *et al.* (2000: 20). She may not be emotionally ready for the social demands of a heterosexual relationship. Furthermore, dissatisfaction with size and weight may be experienced and she may be exposed to high risk and irresponsible behaviour.

Late developers experience life differently from their peers: they experience little confidence and self-esteem, are not as physically strong and active; they are more restless and are generally less popular (Berger, 2003: 444; Thom in Louw, 1993: 388). Some boys may be shunned by girls and thereafter experience sex-role doubts, or they may react rebelliously and in a domineering fashion to compensate for their feelings of inadequacy. However, late development can include advantages: firstly, intellectual compensation is noted: late developers are often described as insightful, and secondly, they also experience more time to develop emotionally and are often emotionally mature before their peers (Berger, 2003: 444). Gouws *et al.* (2000: 17) and Berger (2003: 445) explain that the following tendency has been noted in developing countries: the age at which children reach puberty and maturity is decreasing and the height reached at maturity is increasing. This has been attributed to healthier diets, better medical care, improved sanitation and fewer childhood diseases, due to immunisation.

Physical development, either early or late, results in sexual maturity and it is important for the adolescent to satisfy her sexual needs in a socially acceptable and responsible way so that it contributes to the development of her identity and consideration of her physical health (Thom in Louw, 1993: 390). The adolescent's reaction to sexual impulses determines whether she will achieve this developmental task successfully.

■ Reactions to sexual impulses

Berger (2003: 445) states that all physically mature creatures have the urge to mate and reproduce, therefore it is understandable that humans seek sexual interactions before they are 20 years old. These sexual interactions and attitudes are largely learnt and adolescents are taught cultural norms that govern the boundaries on sexual behaviour (Thom in Louw, 1993: 391).

The effects of early sexual activity may present various physiological hazards of which the two most common will be discussed, namely sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

Since an increasing number of adolescents are sexually active, have more than one sexual partner and are not inclined to practise contraception by using a condom, the rate of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoea, genital herpes, syphilis and chlamydia is higher in this group (Berger, 2003: 445; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 163; Thom in Louw, 1993: 398). Berger (2003: 445) states that sexually active adolescents also risk exposure to the HIV virus as the possibility increases if a person:

- ❑ is already infected with sexually transmitted infections (STI's);
- ❑ has more than one partner; and
- ❑ does not use condoms.

According to Berger (2003: 446) these high-risk behaviours are common in adolescents and their sex partners. In addition to this, the younger people are when they contract STI's, the more reluctant they are to seek treatment and alert their partners. Moreover, early irresponsible sexual activity coupled with erratic medical care can result in infertility later (Berger, 2003: 446). It is clear that the adolescent's reaction to her sexual impulses can lead to heightened vulnerability, especially regarding her physical and mental health and self-concept.

Unwanted pregnancies not only hamper the adolescent's personal, emotional and educational growth, it also presents possible medical complications (Berger, 2003: 446; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 171). In younger girls, an increased risk of complications exists as the uterus and overall body functions are not yet mature - in older girls these risks are lowered (Berger, 2003: 446).

2.3.1.5 Heightened vulnerability - health and hazards for the adolescent

Adolescence is a healthy time, as the infectious diseases of childhood become less common and the major diseases of adulthood are rare (Berger, 2003: 449; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 33). Even though adolescents do not generally have to contend with health problems and disease, they do have a number of hazards that they may face. Their own actions can be particularly hazardous

and harmful. The following hazards are discussed below: nutrition, dieting and drug use.

□ **Nutrition**

The rapid body changes of puberty require fuel in the form of additional calories, as well as vitamins and minerals. However, few adolescents consume the recommended servings of fruit and vegetables, nor do they drink enough milk (Berger, 2003: 451). The nutritional imbalances are more typical in girls than in boys, as girls tend to follow diets in retaliation to the physical changes that they are experiencing (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 30). Consequently, the deficiencies have a greater impact on girls as they have a greater need for certain nutrients because of menstruation and even because of early pregnancies (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 30).

The following figure identifies some common dietary deficiencies experienced during adolescence (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 31; Rice, 1990: 156).

Figure 2.3 Dietary deficiencies experienced during adolescence

- ◆ Calcium – primarily due to inadequate intake of milk;
- ◆ protein and iron – lowered intake of green vegetables, eggs and red meat (especially true of girls);
- ◆ insufficient vitamins, especially A and C – lack of sufficient vegetables and fruit; and
- ◆ thiamine and riboflavin.



□ **Dieting as a disease**

Adolescents experience an increased appetite during puberty, in order for the body to cope with the physiological changes that take place. Consequently body mass increases.

Body image is closely tied to self-concept and girls are especially likely to worry that they are too fat even when their bodies are becoming womanly. When body size changes dramatically at puberty, many adolescents want to

stop the process. Many young girls and boys diet for a few days or weeks in order to control their appearance (Berger, 2003: 452). Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia nervosa are two consequences of constant weight preoccupation.

Berger (2003: 452 - 453) defines anorexia nervosa as a serious eating disorder in which a person restricts eating to the point of emaciation and possible starvation. Anorexia nervosa is a life-threatening emotional disorder characterised by an obsession with food and weight (Gilbert & DeBlassie in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 140). According to the DSM-IV-R there are four symptoms of anorexia nervosa:

- refusal to maintain body weight at not less than 85 percent of the normal weight for a specific age and height;
- intense fear of gaining weight;
- disturbed body perception and denial of the problem; and
- in adolescent and adult females, lack of menstruation.

Secondary symptoms of this disorder include loss of menstrual periods, vomiting, social withdrawal, loss of head hair, brittle nails, constipation and difficulty in urinating (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 140).

Unfortunately the anorexic does not become satisfied with her body weight and her distorted body image, coupled with feelings of uncertainty, inadequacy and helplessness, can cause serious physical and psychological consequences (Berger 2003: 453; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 141).

Bulimia Nervosa is occurring with increasing frequency among adolescents and is a prevalent and serious health condition that affects adolescents across diverse ethnic groups (Le Grange & Lock, 2002: 19 - 20). Berger (2003: 454) defines bulimia nervosa as an eating disorder in which the person, usually a female, engages repeatedly in episodes of binge eating, followed by purging through induced vomiting or use of laxatives. The hazards of this eating disorder are also far-reaching as it affects the nutritional balances in the body.

To warrant a clinical diagnosis of bulimia, bingeing and purging must occur at least once a week for three months and the person must have uncontrollable urges to overeat and must show a distorted self-judgement based on misperceived body size (Berger, 2003: 454; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 142). The bulimic person is unlikely to starve to death, but can experience serious health problems, including severe damage to the gastrointestinal system.

❑ **Drug use and abuse**

Substance abuse is another health hazard for the adolescent. Pretorius, van den Berg & Louw (2003: 1) describe the increase in substance abuse among adolescents as one of the biggest problems facing South Africa. Berger (2003: 456) distinguishes between drug use, drug abuse and drug addiction:

- drug use is the ingestion of a drug, regardless of the amount or the effect;
- drug abuse is the ingestion of a drug to the extent that it impairs the user's biological or psychological well being; and
- drug addiction is a situation in which a person craves more of a drug in order to feel physically or psychologically at ease.

Gateway drugs are drugs such as alcohol, tobacco and marijuana, the use of which increases the risk that a person will later use harder drugs. This does not imply that all adolescents who use these drugs will necessarily abuse harder drugs, but it implies that those who use hardcore drugs began with gateway drugs (Berger, 2003: 456). Furthermore, the adolescent finds herself in a social environment in which there is a fair degree of social support for, exposure to, and relatively limited disapproval of the use of these gateway drugs (Rocha-Silva in Pretorius *et al.*, 2003: 2).

Marijuana slows down thinking processes, particularly those related to memory and abstract reasoning. Such impairment is problematic in early adolescence, when academic learning requires greater memory and a higher level of abstract thinking (Berger, 2003: 457, Pretorius *et al.*, 2003: 1). The repeated "mellowness" may turn into a general lack of motivation and indifference to the future. The result is apathy at the very time when adolescents need to be focusing their energy on meeting the challenges of

growing up (Berger, 2003: 457). Adolescents should thus be informed of the dangers of experimenting and with using any form of drugs.

Nicotine, a toxic chemical found in tobacco, is probably the most addictive drug of all, yet adolescents seem unaware of the risk involved in smoking. The use of tobacco decreases food consumption and interferes with the absorption of nutrients. As a result, the person's growth rate slows down. Smoking can also reduce fertility in both sexes, as it has an influence on the sexual/reproductive system. Impairment is likely when a young person's body is just beginning to adjust to the fluctuating hormones that characterise adulthood (Berger: 2003: 456).

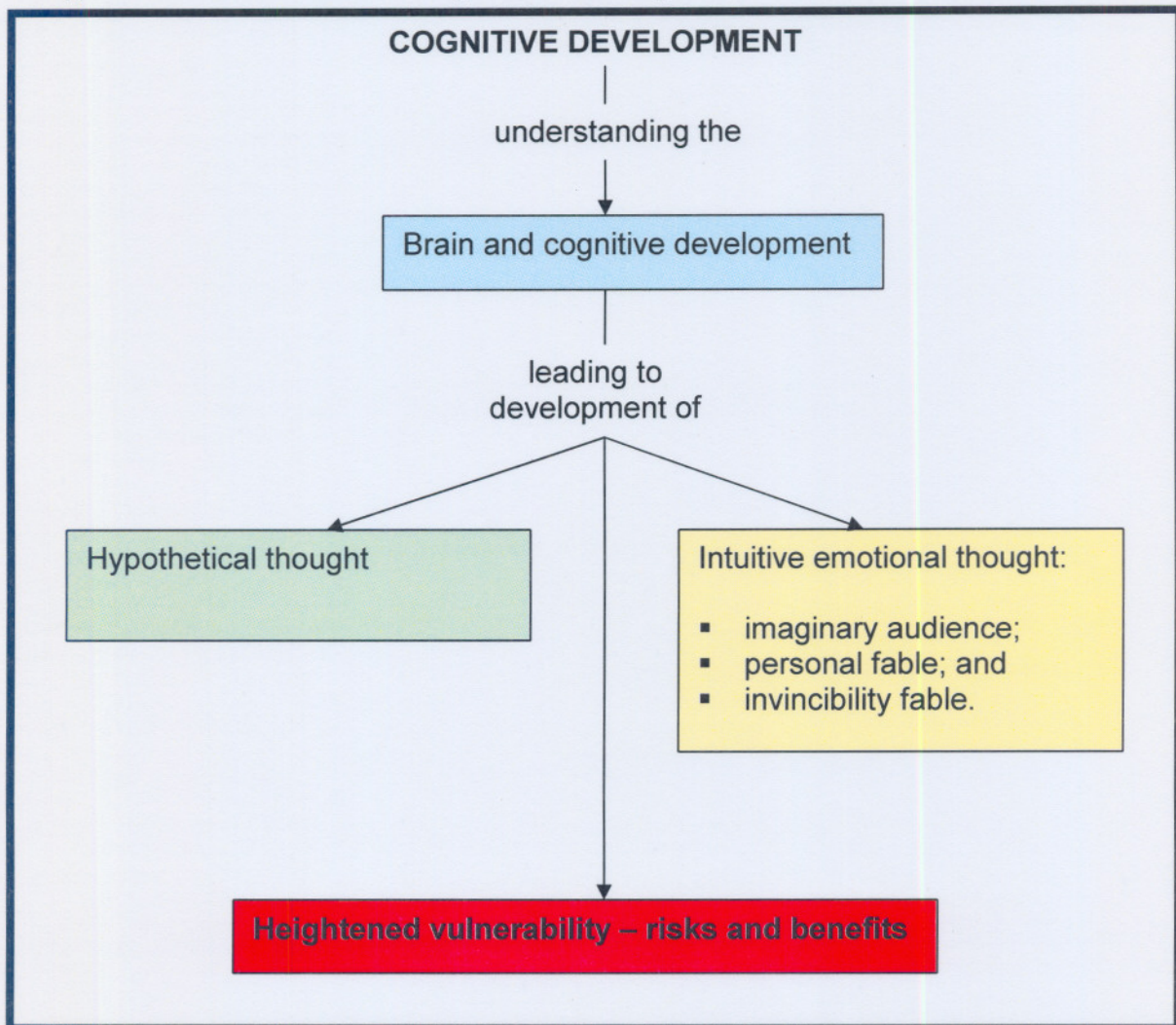
Drinking alcohol is more harmful in adolescence than in adulthood. One reason is that even in small doses, alcohol loosens inhibitions and impairs judgement – dangerous in young persons who are already coping with major physical, sexual and emotional changes (Berger, 2003: 457; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 182). Another reason is that drinking in adolescence correlates with abnormal brain development; it impairs memory and self-control by damaging the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex. Although some early drinkers already have emotional and attention difficulties, most early drinkers are well liked by their peers; they drink not because they are socially isolated, but because they are part of the social group (Berger, 2003: 457; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 182).

The biological and physical changes that take place have a considerable influence on adolescents' lives (Du Toit *et al.*, 1997: 2). The emotional complexities and stress associated with the experience of physical change during puberty and the increased sexual awareness increases the risk of vulnerability. Furthermore, optimal physical development is of vital importance as it indirectly affects other domains of development.

2.3.2 The Domain of Cognitive Development

Cognitive development can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2.4 The domain of cognitive development



The study of cognitive development is the study of how thinking and mental processes change with age (Rice, 1990: 170). Woolfolk (1998: 25) identifies three principles of cognitive development. Firstly, that individuals develop at different rates; secondly, that their development is relatively orderly; and finally, that development takes place gradually. In light of these principles it is clear that cognitive development is characterised by processes that are universal in all adolescents.

Berger (2003: 465), Gouws *et al.* (2000: 37) and Woolfolk (1998: 25) state that cognitive development accelerates markedly during adolescence. Cognitive development refers to the continuous and cumulative development of intellect; it concerns everything that has to do with knowing – perception, conceptualisation, insight, imagination, knowledge and intuition (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 38). During adolescence, major advances in cognition occur, as the adolescent becomes more adult and adept in the use of analysis, logic and reason (Berger, 2003: 465). During this period of development, the adolescent attains self-knowledge and knowledge of her life by formal means (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 37).

2.3.2.1 Brain and cognitive development

Cognition during adolescence develops as the more concrete and literal way of thinking is replaced by a rational and lateral way of thinking that creates a critical frame of mind that assists the adolescent to develop a critical consciousness (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 38).

Expanded memory skills and growing knowledge allow the adolescent to connect new ideas and concepts to old ones (Berger, 2003: 465). The brain maturation continues and the adolescent is able to connect, grasp and refute ideas much faster than when she was a child. Metacognition – the thinking about thinking – also increases and the adolescent is able to arrive at her own conclusions (Berger, 2003: 465).

The prefrontal cortex becomes more densely packed and efficient during adolescence. Berger (2003: 465) describes the effects of this physical growth as resulting in the adolescent's increased ability to plan her life, analyse possibilities and pursue goals more effectively. The executive function of the brain increases remarkably through adolescence. Both implicit and explicit memory increases. Furthermore, language mastery improves as more technical and derivative words are added to the vocabulary base. Moreover, nuances, rules and expectations are better understood. A notable change occurs in the adolescent's style of writing and speech, which further indicates the development of her own identity.

Piaget's theory of cognitive development focuses specifically on the processes underlying the cognitive development from birth to adulthood (Berger, 2003: 468; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 39; Woolfolk, 1998: 27; Rice, 1990: 170). His theory encompasses four phases, the fourth of which is the formal-operational stage.

The formal-operational stage of cognitive development, as defined by Piaget, is relevant to the adolescent's cognitive development, as it refers to the development that occurs from age 11 to adulthood. The characteristics of this stage are:

- the ability to solve abstract problems in a logical fashion as the adolescent begins to understand the relationships between concepts such as mass, energy and force;
- the ability to become more scientific in thinking by handling possibilities and hypotheses by means of projecting into the past and the future, and creating new and original ideas; and
- the ability to develop concerns about social issues and identity. The adolescent may begin to display a sensitive comprehension to the intentions and behaviour of other people. In addition to this, she may question and examine social, political and religious systems (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 39; Woolfolk, 1998: 30; Rice, 1990: 176).

Two differentiating aspects of the formal-operational phase, and in particular of adolescent cognitive development, are the ability to develop hypothetical thought and intuitive emotional thought.

2.3.2.2 Hypothetical thought

Hypothetical thought is thought that involves reasoning about propositions and possibilities that may or may not reflect reality (Berger, 2003: 466; Woolfolk, 1998:37). Adolescents who are capable of this level of thought can systematically isolate all the variables involved in solving a problem and then combine them to determine their individual or combined influence (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 42).

A marked development in the adolescent's reasoning is the move away from inductive reasoning towards deductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning refers to arriving at a conclusion based on observation, past experiences and ideas from people in authority. Deductive reasoning is based on a general principle, through logical steps such as application, examples, hypothetical and test cases to a specific conclusion (Woolfolk, 1998: 341).

The development of hypothetical-deductive thought is fundamental to adolescence as it characterises the individual's capacity to think of possibility, not just of reality, and to consider the impossible and less probable, therefore challenging the traditional way of thinking and solving problems (Berger, 2003: 469; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 42). Abstract thought processes involve an organised scientific approach to formal operations which requires of the adolescent to generate different possibilities systematically for a given situation (Woolfolk, 1998: 37; Rice, 1990: 177). This is why adolescents become obsessed with abstract concepts such as love, peace and rebellion. The reflection about a serious issue can become a complicated process. Adolescents are quick to see what is wrong, to criticise it and imagine what it could be (Berger, 2003: 466).

2.3.2.3 Intuitive emotional thought

Intuitive thinking refers to the mode of information processing that begins with a belief or an assumption that quickly and uncritically develops supporting ideas as if these original beliefs were facts (Berger, 2003: 472). In this process ideas are discovered and applied and not hypothesised or analysed. This type of cognition is considered to be impetuous, as decisions are not based on critical thinking, but rather on whether the decision feels right or not.

Adolescents frequently think about themselves and are intently focussed on their own ideas - this intense self-awareness is referred to as egocentrism (Berger, 2003: 472; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 41; Woolfolk, 1998: 37; Rice, 1990: 183). The adolescent is concerned with analysing her own beliefs and ideas

and this ability is characteristic of the formal-operational stage of cognitive development (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 41).

Reflection on the day's experiences and peoples' perception of them is very important for the adolescent as they are then able to sort out conflicting feelings about parents, peers and school (Berger, 2003: 472). Adolescents are exceptionally sensitive to other people's perceptions and regard themselves as more important than they actually are (Berger, 2003: 472; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 41).

The adolescents' egocentrism manifests in the creation of an imaginary audience, personal fable and invincibility fable.

- **Imaginary audience**

This refers to the belief that everyone is watching and analysing them. In other words, it is the false belief that others are intensely interested in their appearance and behaviour (Berger, 2003: 473; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 41; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 285; Woolfolk, 1998: 38; Rice, 1990: 183). It also signifies that the adolescent is not yet comfortable in the broader social world.

- **Personal fable**

Berger (2003: 473), Gouws and Kruger (1994: 53) and Kail and Cavanaugh (2000: 285) define this concept as adolescents' false belief that they are destined to have a unique, heroic or legendary life. That would imply that they are unique and singular as individuals and are distinguished by their unusual experiences, talents, perspectives and values.

- **Invincibility fable**

Adolescents' false belief, stemming from adolescent egocentrism - self-absorption - relates to the conviction that they cannot be conquered or harmed by anything that might vanquish a normal mortal (Berger, 2003: 472; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 285).

2.3.2.4 Heightened vulnerability – risks and benefits

Adolescence is a period of rapid change and increased challenges. The cognitive developments that occur empower the adolescent to think independently and to question that which has been learnt in childhood. The power to make choices that are long-lasting poses both benefits and risks (Berger, 2003: 487). Consequences of risk-taking are far more serious during adolescence, as the adolescent overrates the joys of the moment and ignores the future costs. Boys and girls seek thrills and rebel against adult authority and in so doing they often discount the consequences and risk their future by miscalculating probabilities (Berger, 2003: 487).

Gouws *et al.* (2000: 44) suggest that conflict between adolescents and their parents can arise from adolescents' increased independence and ability to solve their own problems. Furthermore, adolescents' more critical approach towards the discrepancies in their parents' actions and values may add to the strained perception of their parents' authority.

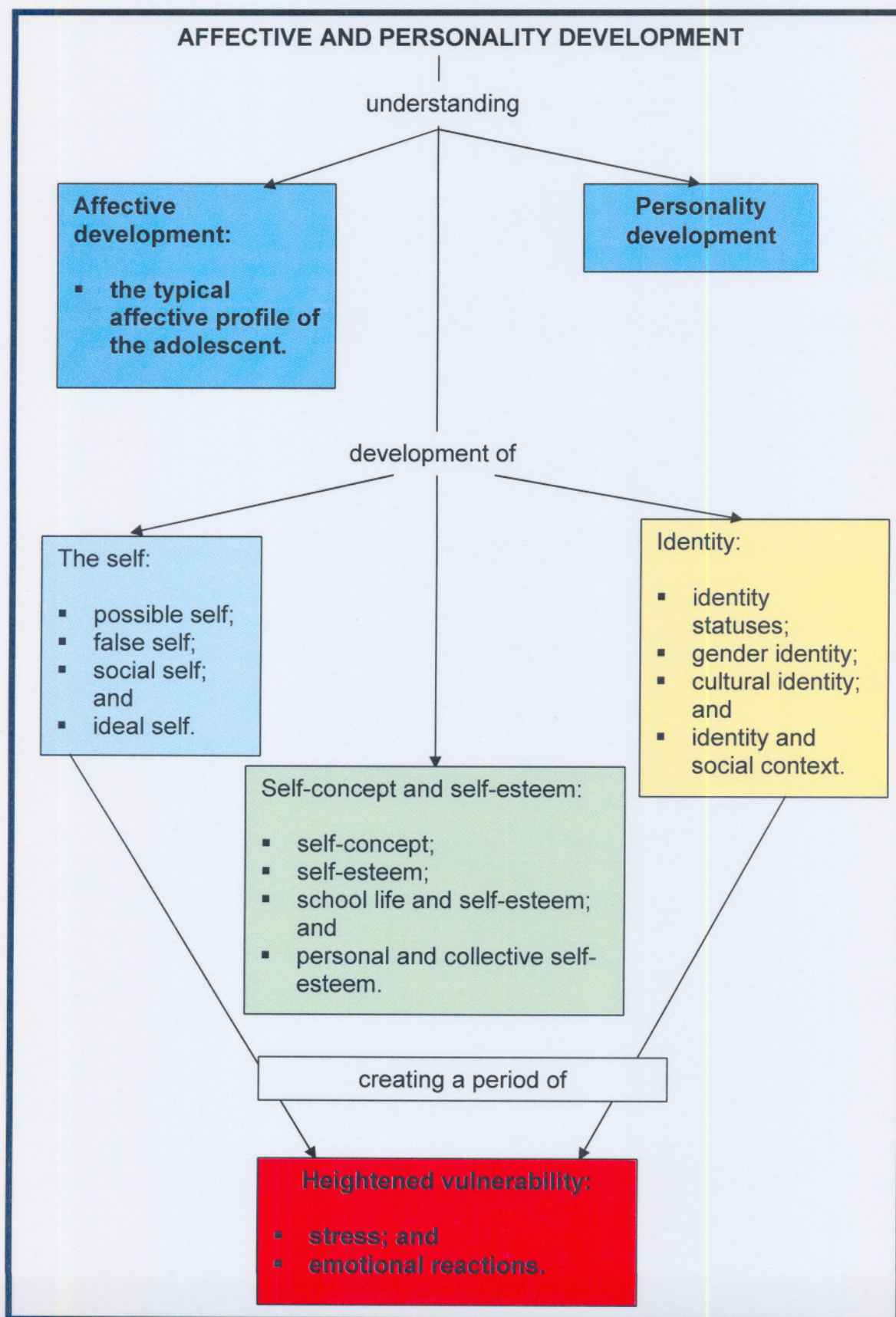
Cognitive development is closely linked with learning and this, in turn, affects the adolescent's self-concept, self-actualisation and motivation (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 44). A benefit is thus that the adolescent who is capable of formal-operational thought is also capable of using a variety of learning techniques, with the result that she is able to accomplish abstract intellectual tasks such as solving mathematical problems and analysing literature.

A consequence of abstract thinking is thus the ability to gain life experience through trial and error. However, the adolescent has scant life experience which may impede her from fully understanding what she has hypothesised. Adolescents who are not capable of achieving this may experience heightened vulnerability.

2.3.3 The Domain of Affective and Personality Development

Affective and personality development can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2.5 The domain of affective and personality development



The period of adolescence is characterised by dramatic personality and identity development. Rice (1990: 220) proposes that affective and personality development is one of the most important aspects of adolescent development. The development of the self, self-concept, self-esteem and identity is vital for the adolescent's mental health, interpersonal competence, social adjustments, school progress, vocational aspirations and prevention of delinquency (Rice, 1990: 220). These very aspects can cause adolescence to be a period of heightened vulnerability. The importance of personality and affective development should thus be studied.

2.3.3.1 Personality development

Theorists and researchers differ significantly as to how the personality develops. In order to understand this aspect of adolescent development, a wide spectrum of theoretical perspectives on adolescent personality development and identity acquisition should be considered.

Theorists who study the personality from a biological perspective see biogenetic factors as the main cause of changes in behaviour and in the affective life during adolescence (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 65). This perspective emphasises the significant influence of physical changes on the holistic development of the adolescent.

Carl Rogers defined personality development from the Person-Centred perspective explaining that each person has a unique personality that is determined by her self-concept and the individual functions in her own private inner world (Corsini & Wedding, 1995: 136; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1995: 376).

The interpersonal or sociopsychological theory of Sullivan describes a person's personality as developing in consequence of her striving for needs satisfaction and safety through interpersonal interactions (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 64).

On the other hand, the psychosocial development model of adolescence, proposes that personality development occurs as the individual needs of adolescents must be reconciled with the demands made of them by society (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 65).

Erik Erikson considers both genetic and social influences in the development of human personality (Meyer *et al.*, 1995:152). Certain demands made by society at a certain age in conjunction with the maturation of certain abilities and interests of the individual determine personality development.

Various perspectives regarding personality development may be considered. However, an eclectic approach to understanding this aspect of adolescent development presents a holistic view of personality development.

2.3.3.2 Affective development

According to Gouws and Kruger (1994: 94) affective development refers to all the aspects involved in the manifestation of personality, such as emotions, feelings, passions, moods and sentiments. It is not merely a term used to describe the emotions of an individual.

- **The typical affective profile of the adolescent**

The typical affective profile of the adolescent is described as labile due to the heightened emotionality and emotional lability that characterises the adolescent years, as a result of the variety of factors causing a change within the adolescent (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 96). During this period of development, the adolescent yearns for an identity and change in relationship with her parents, which results in conflict and tension. According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 96), the excessively high standards of maturity expected of the adolescent by society, combined with the adolescent's own unrealistic aspirations, result in feelings of inadequacy which in turn leads to heightened emotionality.

Gouws *et al.* (2000: 97) suggest that educational intervention may assist the adolescent to achieve greater emotional stability. The adolescent should be taught skills to help her to handle her emotions through:

- ♥ verbalising emotions;
- ♥ displaying a sense of humour;
- ♥ being afforded the opportunity to cry and to be supported; and
- ♥ being allowed the opportunity to release pent-up emotion through physical activity.

The search for “self” and “identity” are two important aspects of the adolescent’s personality and affective development.

2.3.3.3 The self

The self refers to a person’s view of herself, it may also serve as a synonym for personality or further aspects of the personality. In addition to this, self also refers to the identity and images of oneself (Woolfolk, 1998: 79; Meyer *et al.*, 1995: 9).

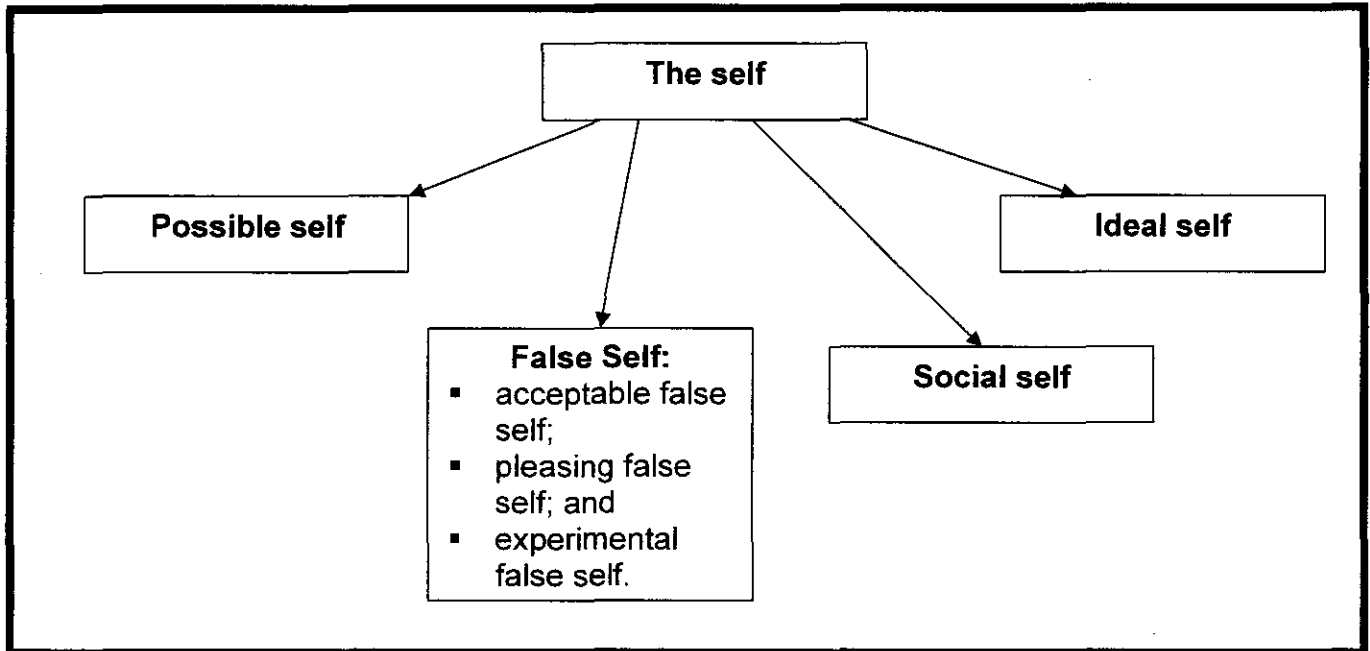
The psychosocial changes that the adolescent endures are critical to bringing the young person to adulthood; most importantly it requires social maturity. Berger (2003: 497) supposes that the development of self and identity requires the adolescent to relate to:

-  her parents with new independence;
-  her friends with new intimacy;
-  her society with new commitment; and
-  herself with new understanding.

This domain of development is chiefly characterised by the quest for self-understanding. The adolescent continually addresses the central issue of “Who am I?” The momentous changes in various domains of development

such as the physical and the cognitive, spur the challenge to find identity. The self has multiple aspects, as illustrated below.

Figure 2.6 The different aspects of the self



† Possible selves

Berger (2003: 497) defines the possible self as various intellectual fantasies about what the future might bring if some or other course of action is chosen. The adolescent is affected by changing settings and circumstances, mood of the moment or recent experience, and she asks the question: "Who is the real me?" (Berger, 2003: 497; Rice, 1990: 221). This leads to diverse perceptions regarding:

- who she really is;
- who she is in different groups or settings;
- whom she might like to become; and
- whom she fears becoming.

† False self

The false self is a set of behaviours that is adopted by a person to combat rejection, to please others, or to try out as a possible self. This may result in

the adolescent acting in ways that are contrary to her core being. Harter *et al.* in Berger (2003: 498) identify three distinct types of false selves:

➤ **The acceptable false self**

This self arises from the adolescent's perception that parents and peers reject the real self and so she adopts a self which she believes will be acceptable to her peers or parents. As a result of this pretence, the adolescent tends to feel worthless, depressed and hopeless. Furthermore, in order to hide her true nature, she may experience low levels of self-understanding and self-betrayal (Berger, 2003: 498).

➤ **The pleasing false self**

This false self arises from the desire to impress or please others. It is a common development among adolescents and they are less debilitated psychologically. Through this process, the adolescent should develop greater self-understanding (Berger, 2003: 498).

➤ **Experimental false self**

According to Berger (2003: 498), the adolescent who experiments with this false self is able to acknowledge that she does so in order to test how it feels. The adolescent is aware that this is not her usual expected behaviour. However, she considers this as a period of experimentation. Such an adolescent may possess a higher level of self-esteem and self-knowledge.

† **Social selves**

The social self influences how the adolescent sees herself. It is the persona put forward for others to see and it develops from social involvement and interactions, as well as from social status (Rice, 1990:221).

† **Ideal self**

Adolescents aspire to be a certain kind of person and the ideal self characterises the aspects of whom they would like to be. Their aspirations may be realistic or too high or low. Strang in Rice (1990: 220) proposes that

the ideal self is instrumental to self-acceptance, mental health and accomplishment of realistic goals.

2.3.3.4 Identity

Identity refers to the organisation of personal drives, abilities, beliefs and history into a unique and consistent self-definition of one's self as a unique individual, in terms of roles, attitudes, beliefs and aspirations (Berger, 2003: 497; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 76; Woolfolk, 1998: 70). This consistent image of self is integral to the establishing integrity of personality, which implies that the adolescent will align her emotions, thinking and behaviour to be consistent, no matter what the time, place, circumstances or social relationships (Berger, 2003: 497). It is thus an important task for the adolescent to consolidate a satisfying identity (Schreiber, 2002: 51). Identity formation, in turn, is an ongoing psychosocial process during which various characteristics are internalised, labelled and organised (Levine, 2000: 191).

According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 65), Erikson gives the most comprehensive description of the adolescent's identity development. Erikson describes this phase as being strongly marked by identity crises as the adolescent redefines herself and her role in society.

2.3.3.4.1 Identity status

A further result of the adolescent's affective development is that the adolescent begins to ponder issues such as career options, political identification, religious commitment and sexual ethics. Questions arise concerning how values fit together with expectations for the future and beliefs acquired in the past (Berger, 2003: 498; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 90).

Eric Erikson (1963, 1968) conceptualised the primary psychosocial task of adolescence as one of finding an optimal balance between identity achievement and role confusion (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 66; Kroger, 2000: 145). The search for identity is ongoing in adolescence as the adolescent struggles to reconcile the quest for a conscious sense of individual uniqueness. As a

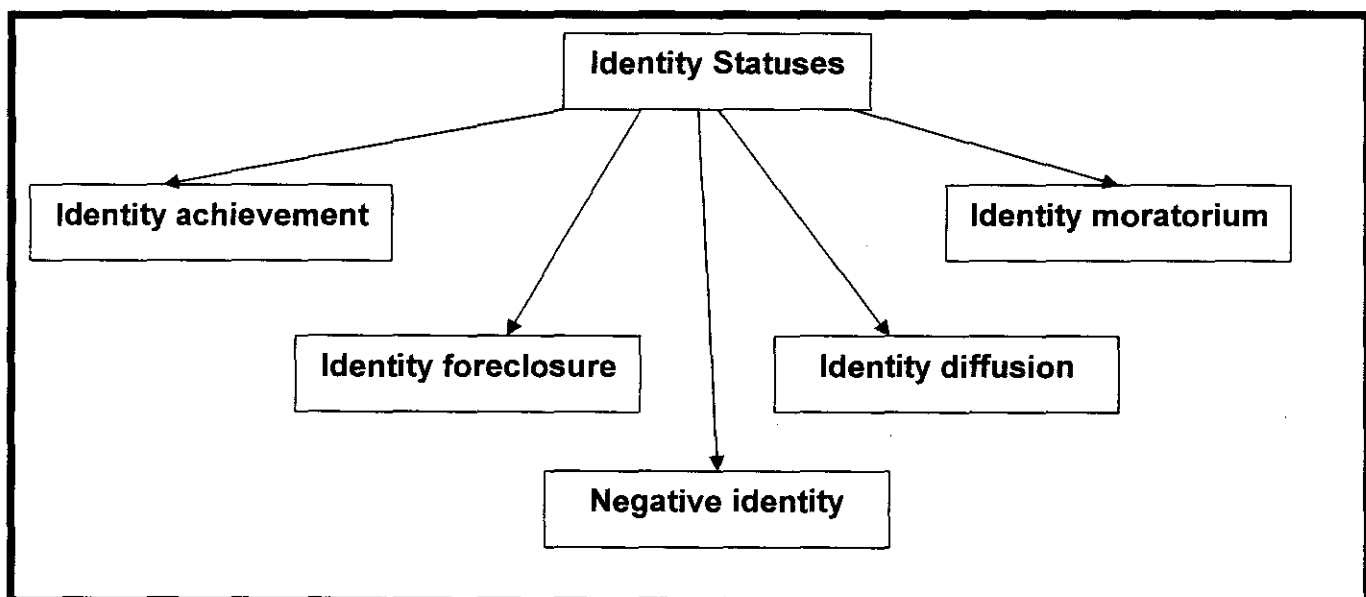
result, the adolescent may experience more than one identity status or condition (Berger, 2003: 498; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 285).

Elaborating on Erickson's work, James Marcia (1966, 1967) offered a model for expanding the understanding of the ways in which the adolescent engages in the task of identity formation (Woolfolk, 1998: 70; Kroger, 2000: 145). Marcia suggests that there are four alternatives for the adolescent as she confronts herself and her choices. Two styles describe committed adolescents, whilst the remaining two describe non-committed adolescents (Kroger, 2000: 145). These four styles are:

- identity achievement;
- identity foreclosure;
- identity diffusion; and
- identity moratorium (Berger, 2003: 499; Kroger, 2000: 145).

A further addition to these alternatives is the negative identity (Berger, 2003: 499; Kroger, 2000: 145). Each, as indicated in the following diagram below, will be discussed.

Figure 2.7 The various identity statuses



➤ **Identity achievement**

This is Erikson's term for the attainment of identity, or the point at which a person understands who she is as a unique individual, in accord with past experiences and future plans (Berger, 2003: 498; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 93). The adolescent who achieves this identity status knows who she is and is able to remain connected to all the morals and attitudes that she has learnt earlier but is not inescapably bound to any of them. Therefore, after considering realistic options the adolescent makes choices and actively pursues these. The period of self-examination and self-discovery has been successful and the adolescent has deliberately chosen a specific identity.

The identity-achieved adolescent has adopted her commitment on the basis of a thoughtful, explorative process with identity-defining directions constructed on her own terms (Kroger, 2000: 145). Furthermore, the adolescent who is identity-achieved is able to form and maintain intimate personal relationships, is able to function well under stress and generally maintains a good sense of humour (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 90; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 285).

➤ **Identity foreclosure**

Identity foreclosure describes the situation of the adolescent who does not experiment with different identities or consider a range of options, but simply commits herself to the goals, values and lifestyles of others, usually her parents (Woolfolk, 1998: 71). The adolescent does not explore alternatives, nor does she forge a personal identity. Instead the adolescent transcends from childhood to adulthood by accepting and adopting her parents' or society's roles and values without questioning and analysis (Berger, 2003: 499; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 258; Woolfolk, 1998: 71).

The foreclosed adolescent is equally committed to identity-defining roles and values, but no genuine exploration process was involved prior to commitment (Kroger, 2000: 145). The identity-foreclosed adolescent assumes her identity based on the identification with significant others, most commonly her parents (Kroger, 2000: 145). The adolescent may appear to be happy and self-assured, maybe even smug and self-satisfied. The adolescent's family ties are

usually very strong, she follows a strong leader and can be very dogmatic if her opinions are questioned.

These two committed styles of identity formation show higher levels of moral reasoning, ego development, self-esteem and personal autonomy (Kroger, 2000: 145).

➤ **Identity diffusion**

This term refers to the situation in which an adolescent is confused or overwhelmed by the task of achieving an identity (Berger, 2003: 499; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 93; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 285; Woolfolk, 1998: 71). Adolescents who experience identity diffusion have few commitments to goals or values set by parents, society or peers. The identity-diffused adolescent will assume whatever identity is required of her for the moment (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 93). Furthermore, the adolescent experiences difficulty in meeting the usual demands of adolescence, such as completing school assignments and thinking of a career – named by Erikson as diffusion of industry. Berger (2003: 499) and Gouws *et al.* (2000: 93) suggest that, if diffusion continues, the individual can move from one relationship to another with no passion and commitment, resulting in the adolescent's being lonely. Diffusion with respect to the time perspective may lead to the adolescent's experiencing difficulty with planning for the future.

The identity-diffused adolescent will rely more on non-adaptive defence mechanisms and will show low levels of intimacy, self-esteem, personal autonomy and ego development (Kroger, 2000: 146).

➤ **Identity moratorium**

Erikson uses this term when he refers to the pause or postponement in the young person's identity formation that allows her to explore alternatives without making final identity choices (Berger, 2003: 499). The adolescent may declare an identity moratorium in the process of finding a mature identity; this is an active effort to deal with the crisis in shaping a satisfactory identity (Berger, 2003: 499; Woolfolk, 1998: 71; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 285). This

'time-out' allows for experimentation with alternative identities without trying to settle on one (Berger, 2003: 499; Kroger, 2000: 145).

The adolescent who declares a moratorium on identity development may show high levels of anxiety and openness to new experiences (Kroger, 2000: 145). Subsequently, this may lead to the adolescent's engaging in inappropriate behaviour or associating with peers who experiment in high-risk activities, causing a period of heightened vulnerability for the adolescent.

➤ **Negative identity**

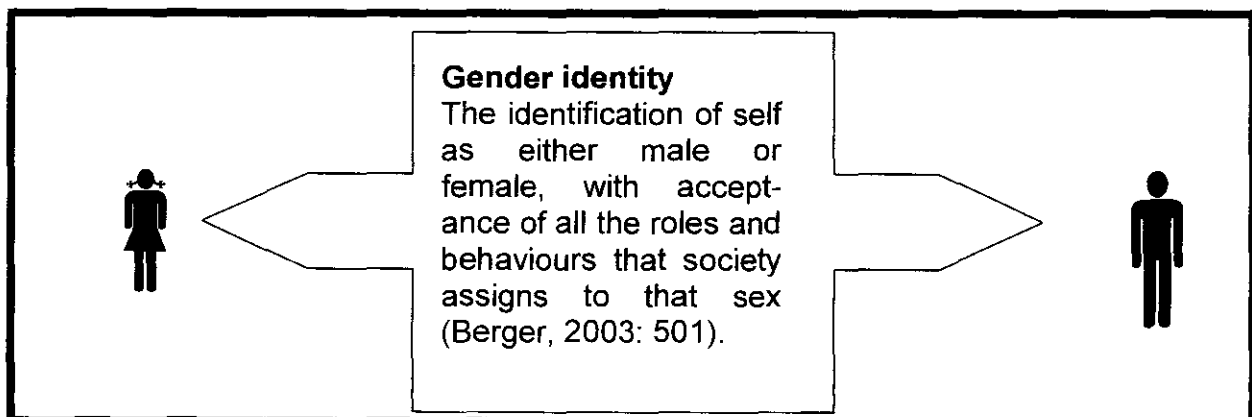
Erikson defines this as an identity that is taken on with rebellious defiance simply because it is the opposite of whatever the adolescent's parents or society expect (Berger, 2003: 498). The adolescent may decide that the roles that her parents or society expect her to fulfil are unattractive and unappealing. In defiance to this expectation and the adolescent's inability to find any alternatives that are truly her own, she will take on an identity opposite to whatever is expected of her (Berger, 2003: 499).

The identity formation of the adolescent is closely linked to parental communication styles and parental expression of moderated levels of both connectedness and individuality associated with adolescent identity exploration (Grotevant & Cooper in Kroger, 2000: 145).

2.3.3.4.2 Gender identity

Gender identity is defined below.

Figure 2.8 Gender identity



According to Berger (2003: 501) sexual orientation and gender identity are much more complex than a simple male-female decision. Each adolescent makes a great number of sexual decisions and needs to select from both gender roles. Such decisions include matters of heterosexual and homosexual relationships: who and when to date, how much physical contact is involved and the issue of romance (Berger, 2003: 501). Contemporary young women are generally concerned with their identity just as young men are. However, females seem to focus more on family and interpersonal relationships.

In forming a gender role identity, the most important aspect is not necessarily the traditional prescriptions. More importantly it is the adolescent's acquisition of a gender role to which she relates comfortably and which contributes positively to the defining of her identity (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 91)

2.3.3.4.3 Cultural Identity

Cultural identity becomes more important when the adolescent sees her background as different from that of others. The perception of 'different' is based more on family history and other people's judgement than on own conclusions. Cultural identity issues can be emotionally, socially, and politically complex (Berger, 2003: 503; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 92). The adolescent who does not experience a positive cultural identity may experience adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability as her self-acceptance and self-concept may be severely opposed. The adolescent who has achieved a cultural identity tends to have higher self-esteem and finds that interactions with friends and family are more satisfactory (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 288).

2.3.3.4.4 Identity and social context

All families and communities are influenced by political and economical contexts (Berger, 2003: 504). Society makes identity formation easier in two ways:

- by providing values that have stood the test of time; and

- by providing social structures and customs that ease the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Stable life circumstances from one generation to the next are important in a culture where everyone holds the same moral, political, religious and sexual values. Berger (2003: 504) ascertains that where social change is slow, identity formation is easy to achieve, although exceptions do occur.

In the modern industrial and post-industrial societies cultural consensus is rarer. All moral and values are open to question by almost everyone. A society where identity formation is difficult to achieve, is characterised by rapid social change, broad diversity of values and goals and an ever-expanding array of choices (Berger, 2003: 504).

Feelings of low self-esteem, worthlessness and little self-confidence are common during adolescence (Pretorius *et al.*, 2003:4). An imperative task for the adolescent is to develop a stable character structure that includes self-esteem and self-awareness (Schreiber, 2002: 52). It is thus crucial to understand the importance of adolescent self-concept and self-esteem.

2.3.3.5 Self-concept and self-esteem

Self-concept and self-esteem are two aspects of adolescent development that need to be understood and promoted.

2.3.3.5.1 Self-concept

Woolfolk (1998: 73) and Rice (1990: 220) state that self-concept refers to the composite of ideas, feelings and attitudes that people have of themselves. Self-concept is thus a conscious cognitive perception and evaluation by the adolescent of herself; it is a structure or a belief about who she is (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 284; Woolfolk, 1998: 73; Rice, 1990: 220). It is not permanent or unchanging, as self-perception varies from one situation to the next and from one phase of life to another (Woolfolk, 1998: 73). As the adolescent develops a deeper awareness of her uniqueness, she will establish a system of attitudes about whom and what she is (Rice, 1990: 220).

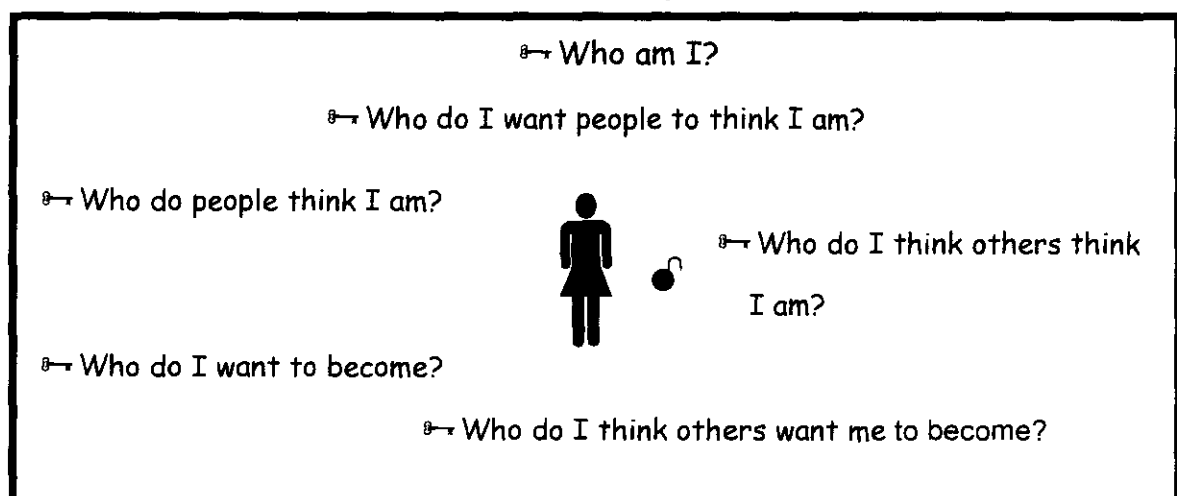
Gouws *et al.* (2000: 82) propose that self-concept is the core of the personality and it exerts an imperative influence on the adolescent's experience of life events.

Self-concept evolves through constant self-evaluation in different situations as one's behaviour varies in different situations (Rice, 1990: 220; Woolfolk, 1998: 73). Furthermore, the verbal and non-verbal reactions of significant people, such as parents, peers, teachers and friends, also influence the development of the adolescent's self-concept (Woolfolk, 1998: 75). As a result of these influences the self-concept is characterised as being complex; several dimensions are closely related and integrated (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 84). The following dimensions of self can be identified (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 82):

- the physical self (the self in relation to the body);
- the personal self (the self in relation to its own psychic relations);
- the family self (the self in family relationships);
- the social self (the self in social relations); and
- the moral self (the self in relation to moral norms).

Rice (1990: 221) suggests that during this time the adolescent may become very self-conscious and introspective and consider various important aspects about the self. The figure below summarises questions that the adolescent may ask of herself.

Figure 2.9 Questions that the adolescent may ask



2.3.3.5.2 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is an affective reaction and evaluation of who you are. Furthermore, it is the value that people place on their own characteristics, abilities and behaviour; in other words: the value they place on themselves (Woolfolk, 1998: 73; Rice, 1990: 232). Self-worth together with self-acceptance will result in self-esteem. Therefore, should an adolescent have a negative sense of self-worth and acceptance, she will experience low self-esteem. The converse is also true. Rice (1990: 232) suggests, however that the adolescent is hypercritical during self-appraisal and becomes vulnerable to self-criticism. The challenge for the adolescent is thus to reconcile the perceived self with the ideal self.

2.3.3.5.3 School life and self-esteem

School is designed for learners to develop competencies, for friendships with peers to be nurtured and as a place where the adolescent's role as community member can be played out (Woolfolk, 1998: 76). Self-esteem and success at school are interdependent. Adolescents who experience a more favourable attitude towards school exhibit positive behaviour in class and greater popularity with their peers (Woolfolk, 1998: 76). According to Woolfolk (1998: 76) interpersonal competence and social problem-solving builds self-esteem. Subsequently self-esteem is determined by how successful a person is at accomplishing tasks that the person values. Consequently, if a task is not highly valued, incompetence in that area is not important. Furthermore, self-esteem is reflected in the way that the person explains her successes and failures and to whom or what she attributes these (Woolfolk, 1998: 76).

2.3.3.5.4 Personal and collective self-esteem

Personal and collective self-esteem are the aspects of an individual which connects her with others and offers her group membership (Woolfolk, 1998: 78). Collective self-esteem refers to the sense of worth of the groups to which one belongs. The individual is either blatantly or subtly reminded that her cultural group or family has less status and power which can result in the erosion of the collective self-esteem. It is important to encourage cultural

pride, which will develop and maintain a positive self-concept about one's racial and cultural heritage (Woolfolk, 1998: 78).

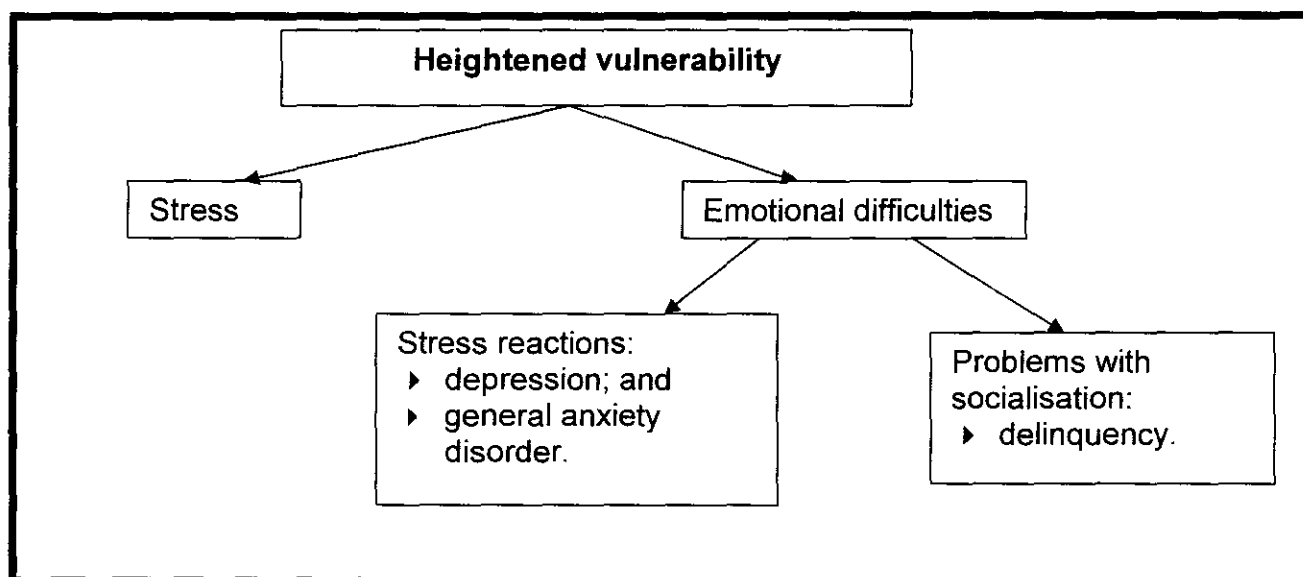
Self-concept and self-esteem result in the mental wellbeing of the adolescent (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 84; Rice, 1990: 222). A positive self-concept will provide dignity to the adolescent's existence; it will have a positive influence on her social interactions and performance in all crucial aspects of her life. If a negative self-concept develops, then adverse effects will result. It is possible that the adolescent can develop a number of psychosomatic symptoms and ill health; she may develop a false front to compensate for her feelings of worthlessness or she may show a shifting and unstable identity (Rice, 1990: 223).

The number of factors that contribute to the affective and personality development of the adolescent escalates this phase of adolescent development as a period of heightened vulnerability.

2.3.3.6 Heightened vulnerability – psychosocial disorders

Heightened vulnerability can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2.10 Heightened vulnerability – psychosocial disorders



The number of physical, cognitive, social and emotional changes that the adolescent encounters during this significant phase of life may have adverse effects on her emotional state of being. A number of risks are identified for the adolescent who is not able to assimilate the affective and personality developments that she would be experiencing.

2.3.3.6.1 Stress

Gouws *et al.* (2000: 147) and Woodbridge (1998: 46) state that stress occurs in the lives of people of all age groups, but stress is particularly prevalent among adolescents. Stress and the inability to manage it can create heightened vulnerability for the adolescent. Excessive stress can affect the adolescent's affective, social and cognitive development, as it may exert a negative influence on her scholastic achievement (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 151).

The factors that cause adolescent stress can come from within the individual or from significant people (parents, teachers or friends), as well as from the wider outside world (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 147; Woodbridge, 1998: 47). The effects of stress can manifest in physical, psychological or behavioural symptoms.

When the stress is from within the adolescent, the factors that can escalate stress would be the forming of the self-identity, personality traits and physical development and appearance (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 148).

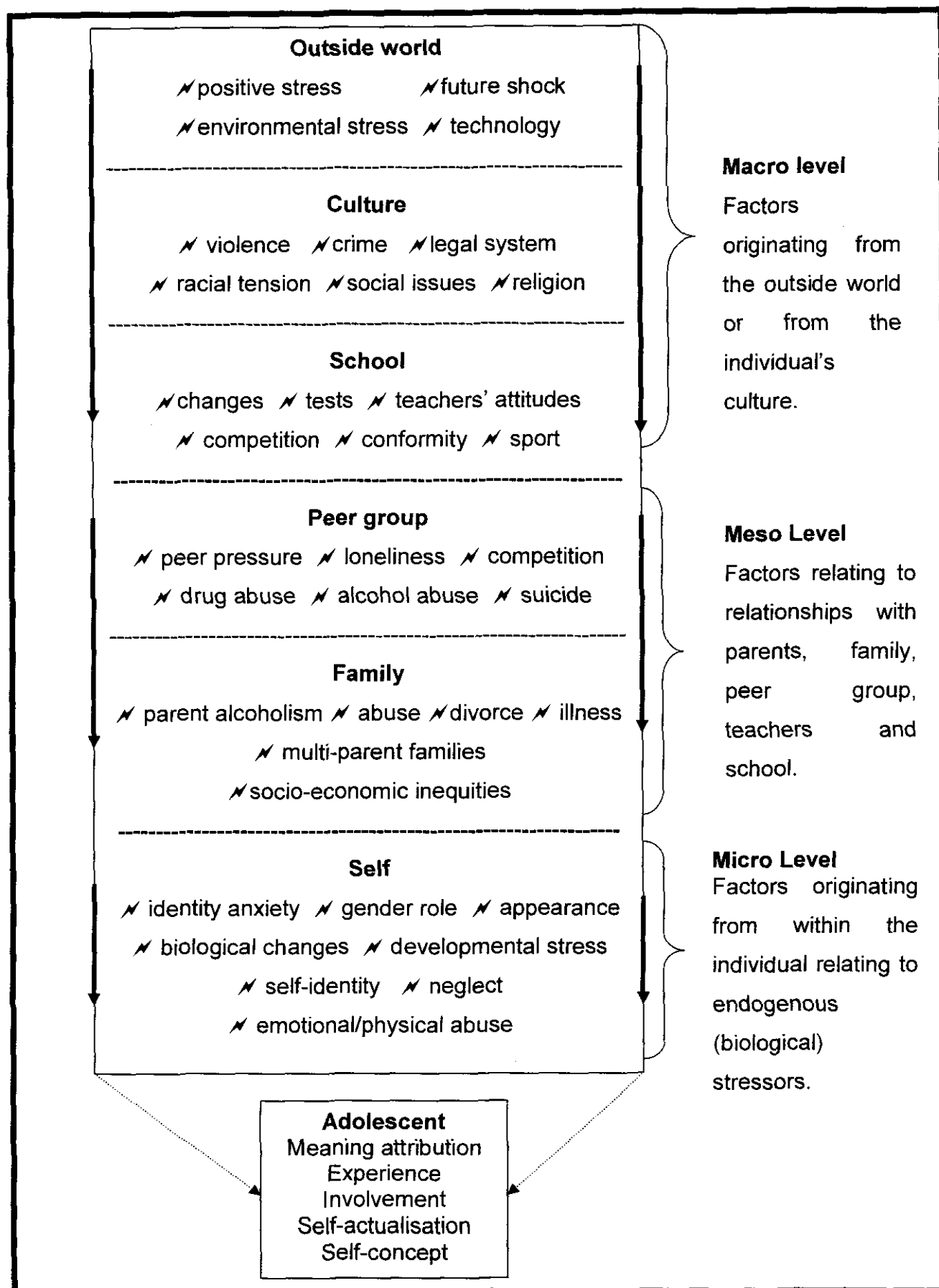
Gouws *et al.* (2000: 148) and Woodbridge (1998: 47) identify socio-economic hardship, excessive work-involvement of parents, sexual and emotional abuse and parental discipline techniques as possible stressors for the adolescent. In addition to these factors, the school and related performance pressures can compound stress in the adolescent life. Stressors related to peer group also heighten the adolescent's vulnerability towards stress. Aspects such as peer group pressure, intimate relationships, loneliness and peer rivalry have a significant effect on adolescents and may cause them severe stress.

The events of the wider outside world may also have an influence on the adolescent's levels of stress (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 148; Woodbridge, 1998: 47). Catastrophic events, political change, civil unrest or wars, occupational uncertainty and media portrayal of the world may all influence the levels of stress that the adolescent needs to endure.

Managing and coping with stress is crucial for the adolescent and effective programmes presented in the learning area of Life Orientation may significantly affect the prevalence of some of the possible effects of stress thereby circumventing physical, psychological or behavioural disorders.

The stressors which needs to be mediated because of their impact on adolescents are summarised in the following figure:

Figure 2.11. Micro/meso/macro sources of adolescent stress (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 148)



When the vulnerability of the adolescent is heightened, emotional difficulties may occur.

2.3.3.6.2 Emotional difficulties

An emotional difficulty is describes as a problem related to feelings and relationships and how these affect behaviour (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002: 350). The nature and causes of the most common emotional difficulties can be grouped into two broad categories, namely:

A) stress reactions; and

B) problems of socialisation (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 350).

Berger (2003: 507) states that adolescence is characterised by intense and rapid mood swings. However, not every moody adolescent suffers from a mood disorder; it is thus crucial to determine whether the emotions affect the adolescent's normal routine. Characteristics that can cause alarm would be when the adolescent experiences strong feelings of despair or elation that are not based on reality and where her judgements and actions are seriously affected.

This section will focus on those most prevalent difficulties noted among adolescents.

A) Stress reactions

A wide range of possible emotions and feelings are experienced by the stressed adolescent at any time, which may result in a range of behaviours and difficulties in an attempt to ward off the anxieties associated with these emotions and feelings (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 350).

Stress reaction behaviours that are most prevalent include:

- ➔ frequent crying, sadness and depression (presenting serious consequences such as suicide);
- ➔ withdrawn, timid, clinging or dependent behaviour (resulting in school refusal or mutism);
- ➔ disobedient, disruptive and attention-seeking behaviour; and

- ➔ petty stealing, lying and avoiding behaviour (as a result of anxiety underlying emotion (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 350).

For the purpose of this section, the stress reactions characterised by Depression and General Anxiety Disorder will be discussed. These reactions have singled out because they are considered common to adolescence (Mash & Wolfe, 2005: 190; 222).

☹ **Depression**

According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 152) and Rey and Wever (1996: 28) the incidence of depression in its mild form increases greatly during adolescence. Biological factors can contribute to the development of depression, as the surge of hormones creates temporary chemical imbalances (Rey & Wever, 1996: 28). Some depressed adolescents have reduced levels of norepinephrine and serotonin, neurotransmitters that regulate brain centres that allow people to experience pleasure (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 307). The development of hypothetical thought may also contribute to the onset of depression in the adolescent who is predisposed toward depression, as this aspect of cognitive development opens up more negative and possibly depressive ways of perceiving the world. Therefore the adolescents' new-found ability to think in abstract terms and to project her unhappiness into the future allows her to experience hopelessness, a central characteristic of depression, becoming more vulnerable to the development of this problem (Rey & Wever, 1996: 28). Environmental demands by society on the adolescent also compound the stressors that young people need to deal with. Together these factors interact and heighten the adolescent's vulnerability during this period of her development.

Depression is characterised by feelings of sadness, despair, melancholia, listlessness and reduction of mental activity, as well as physical drive. As a result, the adolescent may appear apathetic (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 153; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 307; Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 1998: 151; Barlow & Durand, 1995: 259; Rice, 1990: 240). According to Rey and Wever (1996: 28) instead of being sad the adolescent may often appear cranky, grouchy, irritable and

short-tempered. The adolescent may endure sleeping difficulties and even experience appetite problems. Feelings of emptiness and alienation will escalate the symptoms of depression and lead to the development of deficits in the adolescent's social functioning and self-esteem (Berger, 2003: 507; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 152; Rey & Wever, 1996: 28; Rice, 1990: 240). In some cases the drop in self-esteem and development of a form of depression may lead to suicidal tendencies. With the support from family members, friends and the school, the adolescent may be less vulnerable to depression and the effects thereof (Berger, 2003: 507; Rice, 1990: 240)

Adolescent's are inclined to mask depression making the depression very difficult to recognise. In the adolescent's efforts to escape depression, she becomes overactive in engaging in various types of acting out behaviour as she hides her feelings behind a mask of bravado (Rey & Wever, 1996: 29; Rice, 1990: 241). Behaviours that may result from acting-out are sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, trouble with the law and constant social activities (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 153; Rice, 1990: 241).

Depression in the adolescent is very serious because of its likely consequences such as aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, the rates of attempted suicide escalate during adolescence (Barlow & Durand, 1995: 260).

Suicidal ideation refers to thinking about suicide, usually with some serious emotional, intellectual or cognitive overtones (Berger, 2003: 508; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 155). Parasuicide is the deliberate act of self-destruction that does not result in death – the act may be a fleeting gesture or potentially lethal (Berger, 2003: 508). Extreme emotional agitation and confusion accompany the act, as the adolescent is relieved that she did not die.

⊗ **General Anxiety Disorder**

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is probably the most common anxiety disorder among adolescents (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 1998: 126). Individuals who suffer from (GAD) tend to make an enormous catastrophe out of the smallest mishap and they believe that the perceived catastrophe exists.

Reasoning with this individual is impossible. GAD is accompanied by feelings of inferiority, nervousness, sleep disturbances, tearfulness and somatic complaints (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 1998: 125; Rice, 1990: 241). The adolescent will experience this if there is a threat of personal relevance (Barlow & Durand, 1995:162) and during this period of heightened vulnerability the adolescent may feel threatened by the transformation that is taking place in the various domains of her development. Adolescents with anxiety disorders usually look worried, lack self-confidence, rarely take risks in social situations and experience problems of socialisation (Rey & Wever, 1996: 32).

B) Problems of socialisation

An adolescent who displays psychosocial disorders associated with problems of socialisation experiences a problem with the dominant norms of society, and in addition to this, the adolescent may lack a stable and caring relationship with a caregiver (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 351). The most common behaviours displayed by the adolescent who is experiencing problems of socialisation are:

- ➔ aggressive, destructive, cruel, lying and defiant behaviour; and
- ➔ stealing, violence, gang-related and antisocial activities.

These behaviours result from feelings of unhappiness and isolation and exposure to an anti-authority sub-culture (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 352; Rey & Wever, 1996:29).

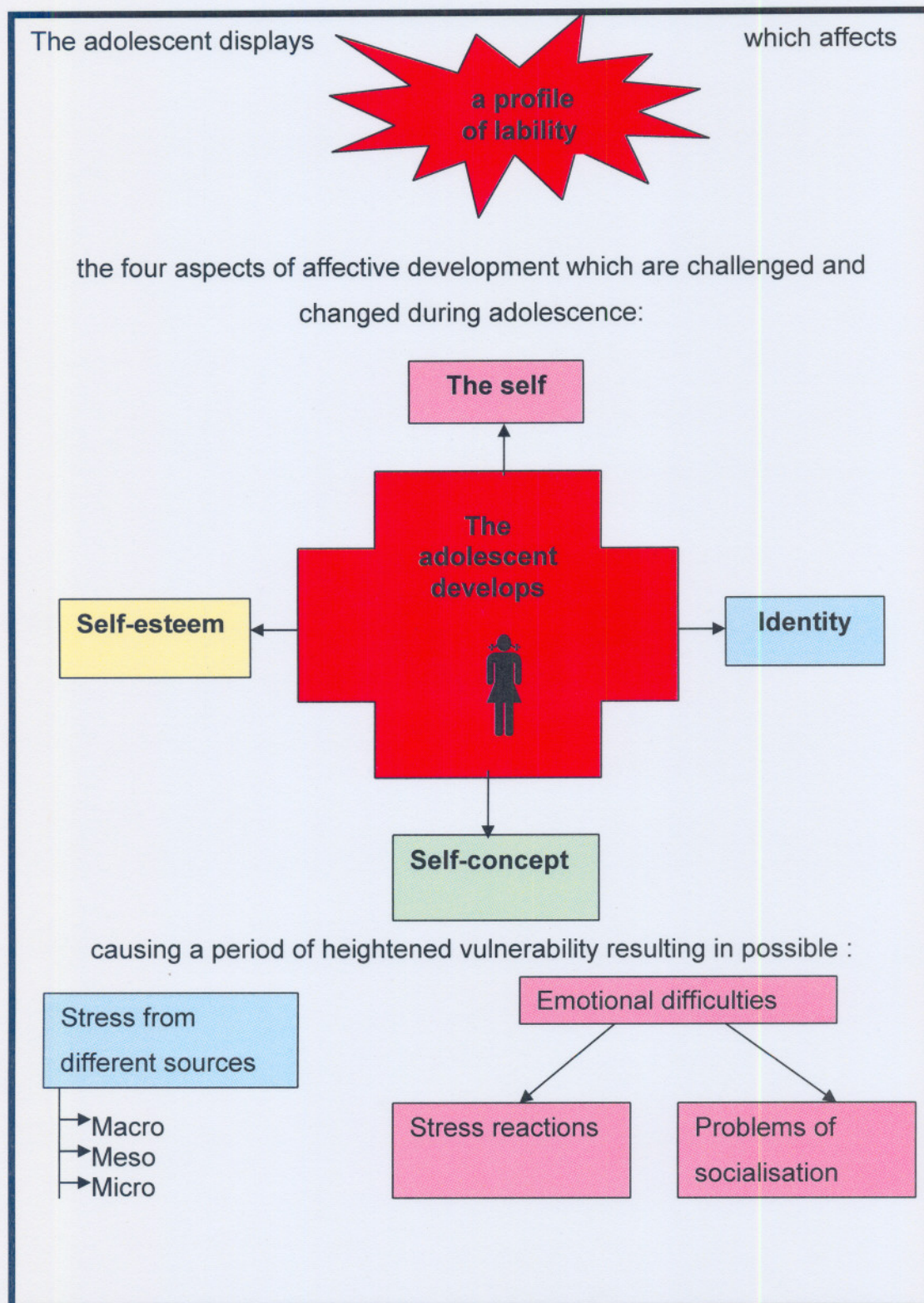
It must be stressed that such behaviours appear and then decline when adolescent development is considered normal (Mash & Wolfe, 2005: 145).

Delinquency is considered youth criminal acts. Anti-social adolescents function on a continuum of everlasting behaviour, which ranges from impulsive or aggressive acts to delinquent ones. Aggressive behaviours may include fighting, defiance or disobedience among others, whilst delinquent acts refer to vandalism, arson, alcohol and drug abuse, and so on (Mash & Wolfe, 2005: 146 – 149).

The adolescent who participates in activities associated with delinquent behaviour often appears to lack a sense of morality or conscience and does not often understand that her behaviour is wrong (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 352). Rice (1990: 225) states that delinquency and poor self-concept are closely related. The adolescent overcompensates for her inadequate self-concept and then adopts self-rejecting feelings and deviant patterns. Deviant anti-authority groups may show the adolescent the approval that she desires.

A number of factors influence personality and affective development of the adolescent. The following summative diagram represents the domain of personality and affective development together with the challenges that cause heightened vulnerability during adolescence.

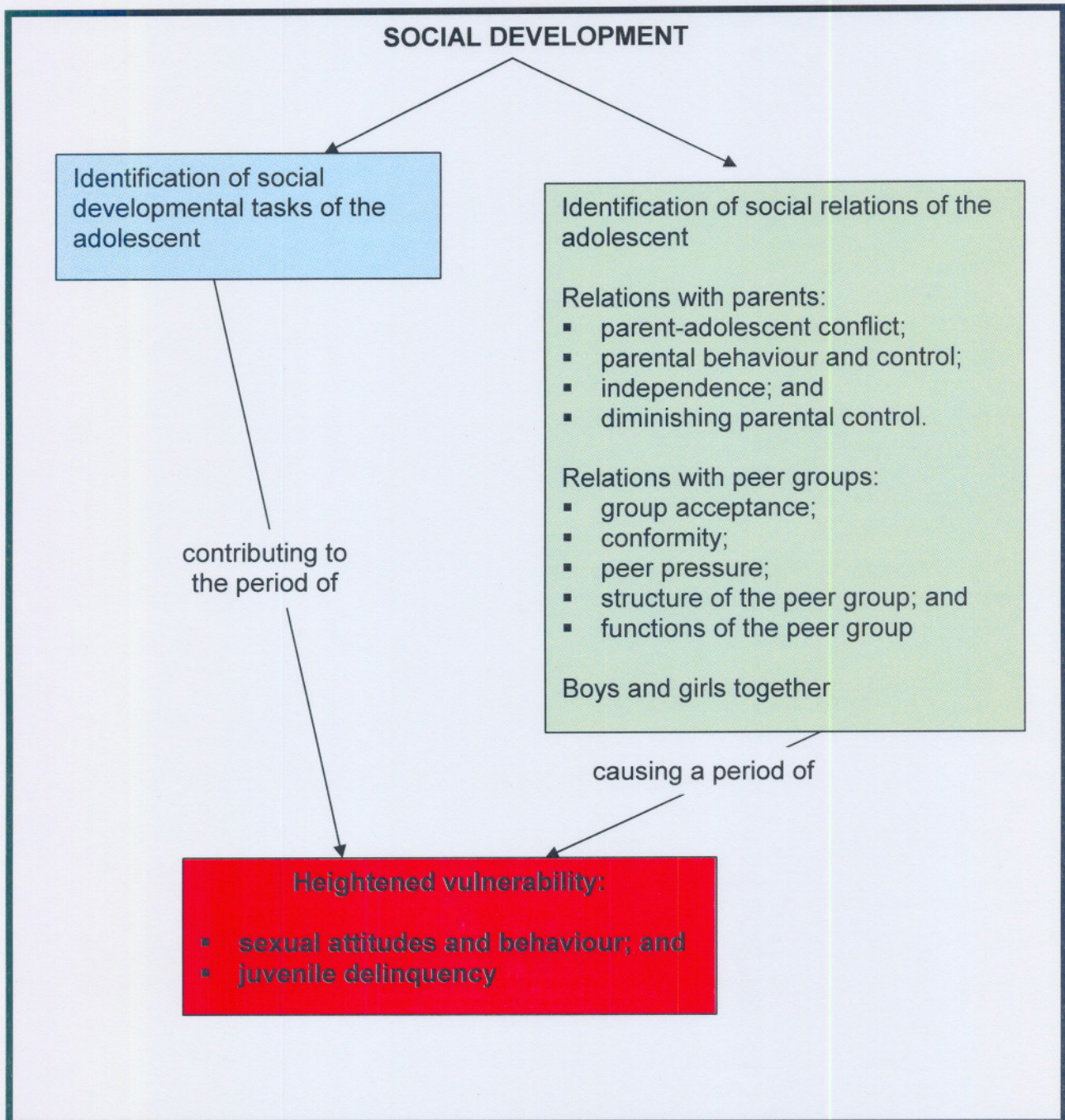
Figure 2.12 Summative diagram of the domain of personality and affective development



2.3.4. The Domain of Social Development

The domain of social development can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2.13. The domain of social development



Adolescence is characterised by physical, cognitive and affective development and, in addition to this, the adolescent has to develop social maturity. The developmental task of socialising is an important aspect of adolescence (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 67). This involves acquiring interpersonal

skills relating to the formation of friendships, intimate relations and interaction with people in authority. Furthermore, the adolescent needs to acquire tolerance for personal and cultural differences and develop an acceptance and self-confidence of her own personal and cultural identity.

Adolescence is a period of increasing independence from parents while acceptance by and association with the peer group becomes more important (Naidoo in Strydom, 2003: 61; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 67). The social emancipation of the adolescent leads to friendships with members of the same sex, as well as heterosexual relationships that assume a romantic or sexual dimension (Naidoo in Strydom, 2003: 61; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 72). During this period of heightened vulnerability, the adolescent is confronted with situations in which she has to make her own decisions, and her values and principles are challenged (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 72).

2.3.4.1 The social development tasks of adolescence

The developmental tasks of adolescence include six important needs of youth (Rice, 1990: 322):

1. The need to establish caring, meaningful and satisfying relationships with individuals.
2. The need to broaden childhood friendships by becoming acquainted with new people of differing backgrounds, experiences and ideas.
3. The need to find acceptance, belonging, recognition and status in social groups.
4. The need to pass from homosocial interests and playmates of middle childhood to heterosocial concerns and friendships.
5. The need to learn about, adopt and practise dating patterns and skills that contribute to personal and social development, intelligent mate selection and successful marriage.
6. The need to find an acceptable masculine/feminine gender role and to learn gender-appropriate behaviour.

These tasks come to fruition in the relationships the adolescent has.

2.3.4.2 The social relations of the adolescent

Family, friends and the community provide sustenance, provisions, direction and balance for the adolescent as she strives for independence, self-reliance and autonomy (Berger, 2003: 516; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 67). Societal forces provide reason for the adolescent to move forward and to reach social maturity.

2.3.4.2.1 Relations with parents

Berger (2003: 516) describes the period adolescence as a time of waning adult influence. This urge does not surface impulsively at the onset of adolescence. Instead, it develops progressively from infancy and it reaches culmination during adolescence (Berger, 2003: 516; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 72). Values and behaviours also become distant from those of parents. However, the two generations generally share similar values and aspirations (Berger 2003: 516). Discontent at home arises from the need of each generation to view family interactions from its own perspective, because it has a different investment in the family scenario. As a result, position in the family is important when interpreting adolescent-parent interactions (Berger, 2003: 517).

■ Parent-adolescent conflict

As the adolescent's urge to achieve independence clashes with the parents' tradition of control, parent-adolescent conflict transpires (Berger, 2003: 517; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 73). Conflict becomes apparent during early adolescence and typically involves petty arguments about habits of daily life that traditionally fall under the mother's supervision. The bickering – repeated and ongoing arguments – peaks as the adolescent feels compelled to make a statement out of defiance to the parents' tradition of control. Family life typically becomes less conflicted as parents grant autonomy (Berger, 2003: 517).

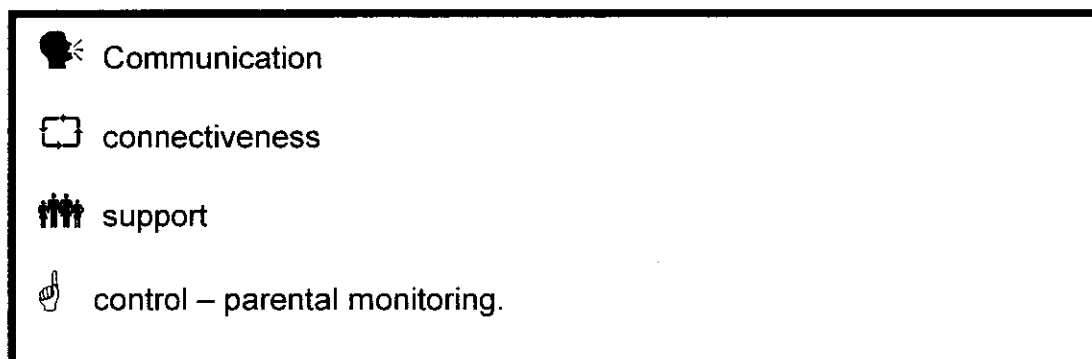
Berger (2003: 518) and Gouws *et al.* (2000: 73) describe adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability for those mired in high-risk parent-adolescent conflict, as it can have disastrous results such as runaway

adolescents, suicide, indiscriminate sex, drug abuse and violence. In a worse neighbourhood, the attraction of delinquent behaviour and peers may entice the adolescent.

Gouws and Kruger (1994: 115) discuss the drastic changes that the black populations of South Africa experience due to the societal factors that are influencing traditional cultural practices. Westernisation has affected the cultural outlook of many young Africans and conflict may arise between parents and adolescents concerning the abandonment of traditional customs and norms.

Berger (2003: 518) identifies family qualities that guide the adolescent towards independence and social maturity. These qualities are summarised in the following figure.

Figure 2.14 Family qualities that guide the adolescent towards independence and social maturity



Pretorius *et al.* (2003: 2) suggest that the effects of negative communication patterns, inconsistent discipline regarding behavioural limits, absence of closeness to parents, lack of parent involvement and weak parental control have a vast effect on the adolescent.

■ Parental behaviour and control

Parental behaviour and control will influence the development of adolescent independence. Thom in Louw (1993: 429) identifies four types of parental behaviour and the possible effects thereof:

- ➔ loving behaviour which is characterised by acceptance, understanding and approval, resulting in positive discipline;
- ➔ hostile behaviour which reflects neglect or rejection, resulting in the adolescent developing poor social relationships or mental, academic and behavioural problems;
- ➔ autonomy which means that the parents allow their adolescent realistic freedom and the effects of this behaviour are an active, outgoing, social and independent individual; and
- ➔ strict parent behaviour which may restrict the adolescent's creativity, initiative and problem-solving abilities.

The style in which parents exercise their authority is also of consequence to the development of adolescent independence (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 71; Thom in Louw, 1990: 430).

👉 Autocratic or authoritarian parents do not permit their adolescent to express her opinion or to show initiative. They expect total obedience from their adolescent and are inflexible with regard to rules. Interaction and intimate communication do not exist. The adolescent who grows up in this household is often unhappy, inhibited and irritable, and lacks self-confidence. Frequently the adolescent will have a negative opinion of her parents and act out rebelliously against all forms of authority (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 70).

👉 Democratic or authoritative parents agree to their adolescent participating freely in discussions and permit her to make her own decisions. However, the final authority rests with the parental approval. These parents are both demanding and nurturing at the same time, as they are sensitive to their adolescent's emotional needs and the call for disciplined behaviour (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 71). The adolescent who grows up in such an environment is generally confident, responsible and independent, and holds a positive opinion of her parents.

☞ The permissive style of parenting allows the adolescent to make her own decisions and permits total autonomy. These parents rarely make demands on their adolescent and they set virtually no limits on her behaviour, values and desires (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 70). The adolescent may feel vulnerable and she may often develop a sense of uncertainty and insecurity.

☞ Laissez-faire parents abandon their role and authority, which allows the adolescent to either accept or reject parental decisions (Thom in Louw, 1993: 429). The result of such a parent-child relationship is that the adolescent has no set rules, boundaries and consequences to her actions. The impact is profound as the adolescent may believe that all adult-child relationships function in such a manner, resulting in conflict with other adults.

■ Independence and diminishing parental authority

An important developmental task of adolescence is the attainment of independence so that the adolescent may establish adult relationships, make a realistic career choice, develop a personal identity and become a unique and autonomous individual with a sound value system (Thom in Louw, 1990: 428). According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 72) and Thom in Louw (1990: 428) the following three objectives are pursued in the process of becoming independent namely behavioural, emotional and moral autonomy.

- ☞ Behavioural autonomy relates to the adolescent aspiring to make her own decisions about her behaviour and actions.
- ☞ Emotional autonomy means that the adolescent attains self-reliance and is able to control herself.
- ☞ Moral autonomy is important to the adolescent, as she desires to develop her own value system to regulate her behaviour.

2.3.4.2.2 Relations with the peer group

Relations with peers are vital to the transition from childhood to adulthood as the adolescent becomes emancipated from parental control, and they fulfil the emotional needs of the adolescent (Berger, 2003: 519; Gouws *et al.*, 2000:

75; Mwamwenda, 1996: 71; Rice, 1990: 346). The peer group therefore acts as a buffer between the relatively dependent world of childhood and the relatively independent world of young adulthood (Berger, 2003: 521).

The need for relations with peers fulfils the adolescent's desire for a closer and more caring relationships in which they can share mature affection, problems and personal thoughts. Adolescents gather friends around them who act as a reference group from whom they can gain strength and help set behavioural and emotional boundaries for themselves (Rice, 1990: 347; Thom in Louw, 1993: 419). More importantly, adolescents learn societal definitions – in the form of social reinforcement – from their peers, in order for them to become part of the larger adult world (Berger, 2003: 520; Ryan, 2001: 1136; Rice, 1990: 347).

The norms and values of the peer group may vary widely from those of the adolescent. Furthermore, the extent and nature of the peer group is complex, especially with regard to the influence it may have on adolescent achievement, beliefs and behaviours (Ryan, 2001: 1136).

▪ **Group acceptance or rejection**

Rice (1990: 350) and Thom in Louw (1993: 423) state that the adolescent's self-concept and self-worth is largely dependent on the approval, support and acceptance of others. Acceptance by the clique or crowd is therefore very important and the desire to belong to a group increases during adolescence. The socially accepted adolescent displays better social skills, she is better at initiating social interactions, more skilful at communicating and better at integrating herself into a conversation (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 258).

Social rejection results in a negative self-concept for the adolescent and, in turn, social rejection can adversely affect the adolescent's ability to learn, possibly causing the adolescent to drop out of school. Furthermore, repeated peer rejection can have serious long-term effects including committing juvenile offences, substance abuse and psychopathology (Pretorius *et al.*, 2003: 2;

Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 258; Thom in Louw, 1993: 423). The socially rejected adolescent may be treated as an outcast because:

- ▶ she does not fit into the same socio-economic group;
- ▶ the group does not meet her emotional needs;
- ▶ her interests vary greatly from that of the group; or
- ▶ she is socially unskilled (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 258; Thom in Louw, 1993: 423).

▪ **Conformity**

The desire to be acknowledged and accepted by the peer group during early adolescence is often attributable to the lack of self-confidence and sense of identity and this leads to conformity (Thom in Louw, 1993: 421). The increase in the adolescent's need for conformity in early adolescence steadily declines as she grows older (Ryan, 2001: 1136). The adolescent may become immersed in the group's behaviour, dress and attitude and, as a result, conform to the group's personality (Rice, 1990: 351).

The figure below shows that conformity to the peer group can be regarded as both positive and negative (Mwamwenda, 1996: 71; Thom in Louw, 1993: 422).

Figure 2.15 Positive and negative effects of conformity to the peer group

Positive effects of the peer group:

- ✓ It promotes emancipation from family home and is an agent for socialisation.
- ✓ It provides a feeling of security, acceptance and understanding.
- ✓ It helps develop social skills that are important for own family and community.
- ✓ It promotes the discussions of topics of mutual interests.
- ✓ It promotes communication with the opposite sex and sexual information.
- ✓ It provides clarification on aspects important to identity.

Negative effects of the peer group:

- ✗ Too much conformity can stifle individualism.
- ✗ The adolescent may become involved in antisocial behaviour.
- ✗ Conflict with parents may develop if the group is not acceptable.
- ✗ The group may emphasise values that do not apply to the adult world.
- ✗ Social development may be hampered as a result of rejection.

- **Peer pressure**

Berger (2003: 519) and Kail and Cavanaugh (2000: 528) define peer pressure as the social pressure to conform to the norms established by an individual's friends – these norms apply to behaviour, dress and attitude. It is frequently considered to be a harmful and negative force that is exaggerated in three ways. Firstly, it is strong for only a few years – it rises dramatically in early adolescence and then declines as adulthood approaches. Secondly, social pressure can be constructive – it eases the transition for the adolescent who is not ready for full independence. Lastly, peers' standards are not always negative as prosocial behaviour is promoted, and it is most powerful when the standards for appropriate behaviour are not clear-cut. Peers choose one another and they generally associate with adolescents whose values and interests they can relate to. Not all adolescents are equally susceptible to negative peer pressure (Berger, 2003: 520; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 258).

Peer pressure can result in adolescents' leading one another into trouble. Adolescents are more likely to be influenced by peer pressure when adults are absent or when their parents are not authoritative (Berger, 2003: 520; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 256). Adolescents who defy adult restrictions produce risky, forbidden and destructive behaviour, which is harmful to themselves and to others. However, most peer-inspired misbehaviour is a short-lived experiment (Berger, 2003: 521).

- **Structure of the peer group**

Three main structures of the peer group are distinguishable, namely the clique, the crowd and the gang (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 256; Thom in Louw, 1993: 419).

The clique is a small intimate group of same-sex peers who are friends in the same Grade at school. These friends tend to be similar in race and attitudes, and are often from the same socio-economic class. Members of a clique will share the same value system and interests, and their membership is voluntary provided all members consent to it (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 256; Thom in

Louw, 1993: 419). The main benefit of the clique for the adolescent, is that its members can develop skills for intimate communication.

According to Thom in Louw (1993: 419), the crowd is a much larger group and is an association of cliques. However, its size makes the forming of intimate relationships very difficult. It does, however, provide the opportunity for the formation of heterosexual relationships, which is an important aspect of adolescent social development.

The gang is associated with illegal and antisocial activities, and the roles of the leader and members are clearly defined (Thom in Louw, 1993: 419). The gang normally has a very clearly defined territory and is formed on a geographic basis. Gangs often originate from defiance to formal structures and authority such as the family, school or church. Some gangs are formed on the grounds of common grievances, while others are created for the purpose of defence and warfare. Common characteristics that occur among members of a gang are poverty, broken homes, lack of suitable role models and lack of control of impulsive and aggressive behaviour.

▪ **Functions of the peer group**

The peer group is associated with various functions in the socialisation of the adolescent. The following are relevant (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 76):

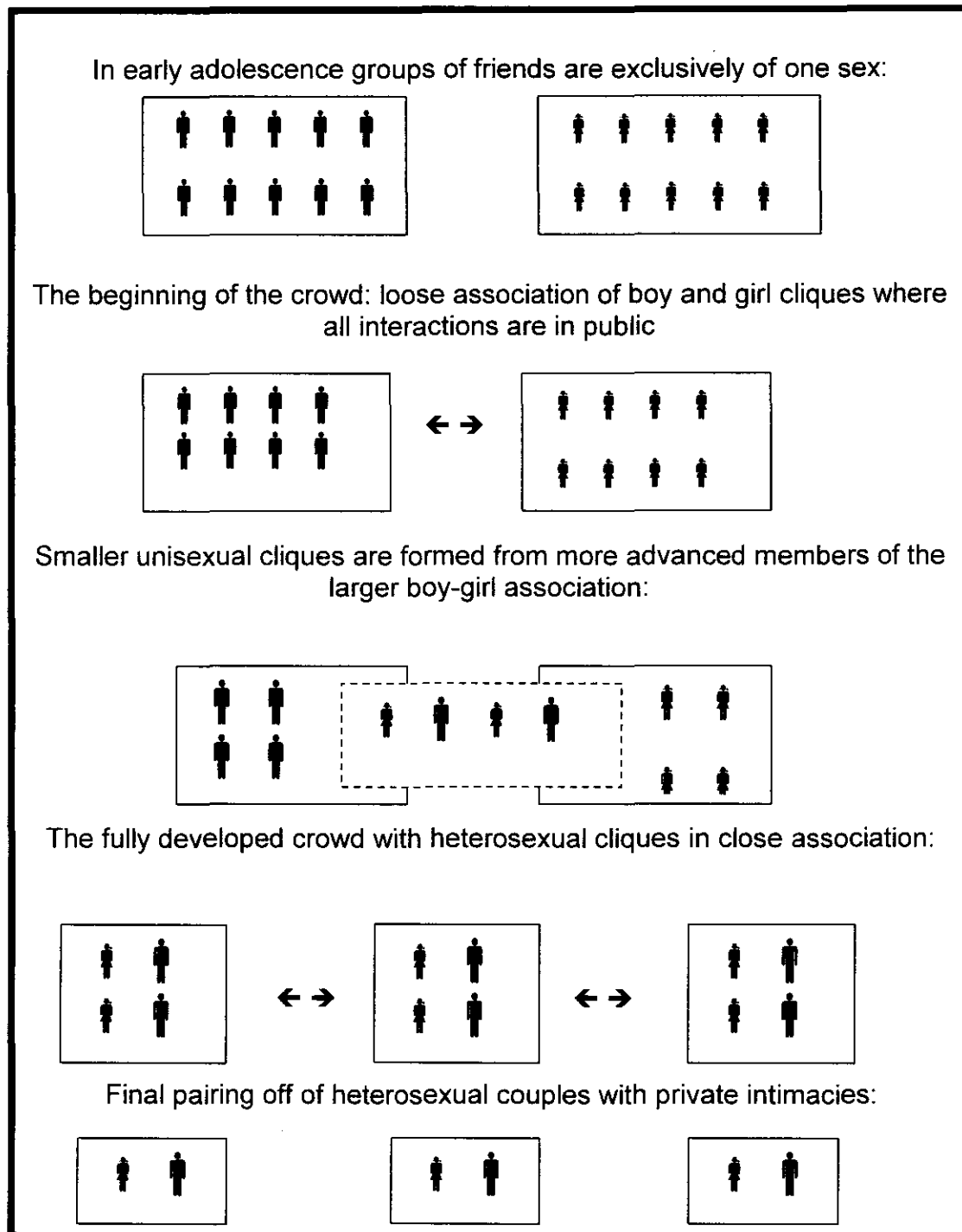
- ◆ emancipation and attainment of independence from the parents;
- ◆ assistance in the search for an individual identity;
- ◆ social acceptability and support;
- ◆ a reference and experiment base – the peer group acts as a frame of reference for behaviour and values;
- ◆ competition with members of her own age group;
- ◆ creation of social mobility; and
- ◆ recreation.

2.3.4.2.3 Boys and girls together

During early and middle childhood, voluntary segregation of sexes is common but as puberty begins, boys and girls begin to notice one another in a new way (Berger, 2003: 522). Sexuality is a central issue for adolescents because of their growing interest in the formation of heterosexual relationships (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 300). Adolescents gradually begin to communicate with one another on a different level and the need for relationships begins to develop. The dating process is an important feature of adolescent life and dates with members of the opposite sex are arranged for a number of reasons. These reasons may be for recreation, experimentation, declarations of independence, status seeking, and a need for participation or sexual satisfaction (Naidoo in Strydom, 2003: 61; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 80; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 299). All these reasons can create a heightened sense of vulnerability for the adolescent. The emotional and sexual demands of heterosexual relationships can be both rewarding and a source of heartache and stress for the adolescent.

The formation of homogeneous relationships or cliques and the gradual progress and development towards heterosexual relationships (Berger, 2003: 522; Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 80) is represented in the figure below.

Figure 2.16 The formation of relationships



2.4.4.3 Heightened vulnerability – social problems in adolescence

Social development during adolescence is a challenging domain of becoming, as a number of issues arise that are closely associated with the adolescent's physical, affective and moral development (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 94). Heightened vulnerability exists for the adolescent, as she must face the

challenges of establishing friendships that will benefit and build her identity while she seeks autonomy from her parents. Furthermore, as the adolescent matures physically and sexually she needs to cope with the forming and maintaining of heterosexual relationships. During this time of development, conflict may arise between her and people in authority as she begins to question their values and seeks independence from them. Rebellion against authorities such as parents, the school and the law may lead the adolescent into delinquent behaviour and association with people who have a negative influence on her.

▪ **Sexual attitudes and behaviour**

According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 110), adolescents move gradually away from the indirect and non-threatening sexuality of their childhood to the more complex, emotionally charged sexual feelings and activities of adulthood. Furthermore this sexual development coupled with the changed attitude towards sexual activities exerts an influence on the adolescent's experience of early sexual activity and sexual preferences.

Sexual activity tends to develop at an earlier stage and to be more intimate sooner in the relationship. Caressing, holding hands, kissing and petting are typical patterns of physical contact in a relationship. The concern for adolescents is the involvement in a sexual relationship when they are not emotionally mature enough to handle the physical, emotional and moral responsibilities that come with an intimate relationship. Peer pressure, curiosity, the media and misperceptions about sex feature as the reasons why teenagers engage in sexual activity (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 111).

Gouws *et al.* (2000: 163) highlight the major reasons for concern about sexual activity among adolescents to be the rate of unwanted pregnancies and the contraction of sexually transmitted infections. The stress, uncertainty and guilt feelings associated with sexual activity that negatively affect the social and emotional development of the adolescent can also influence scholastic achievement.

Attaining a secure sexual identity is a challenging task for adolescents, especially in a society where adolescents are exposed to a variety of attitudes toward sexual matters (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 110). Adolescence is a confusing period for adolescents and possibly more so for those with a homosexual orientation, as they endure fear of rejection by their peers, parents, the school and the church.

▪ **Juvenile delinquency**

Adolescents who become involved in violating the established codes of conduct or criminal activities are considered to be juvenile delinquents. Such individuals are particularly vulnerable to a continued antisocial lifestyle and are in great need of control, guidance and rehabilitation (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 186; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 305; Pretorius, 1998: 290).

The reasons for delinquency are closely related to the social development of the adolescent. Social class may play a role as adolescents seek illegal means to fund their material desires. In addition to this, family processes may encourage delinquent behaviour in that parental absence or the lack of healthy discipline encourages adolescents to challenge the law (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 310). Biven (2002: 40) reports that many juvenile delinquents have been born into situations of emotional and physical deprivation. Furthermore, the delinquent adolescent may have had little experience of moral integrity, as the example of the adults in her life may display an unacceptable degree of selfishness and callousness (Biven, 2002: 40). Also, the rejection by socially favoured groups may lead these adolescents to one another and they may form a group that participates in socially unacceptable behaviour in order to meet their emotional and physical needs.

Mokwena in Gouws *et al.* (2000: 185 – 186) offers causes for the forming of street gangs and the violent youth culture in South Africa:

- youth gangs are seen as a means of survival in a violent society;

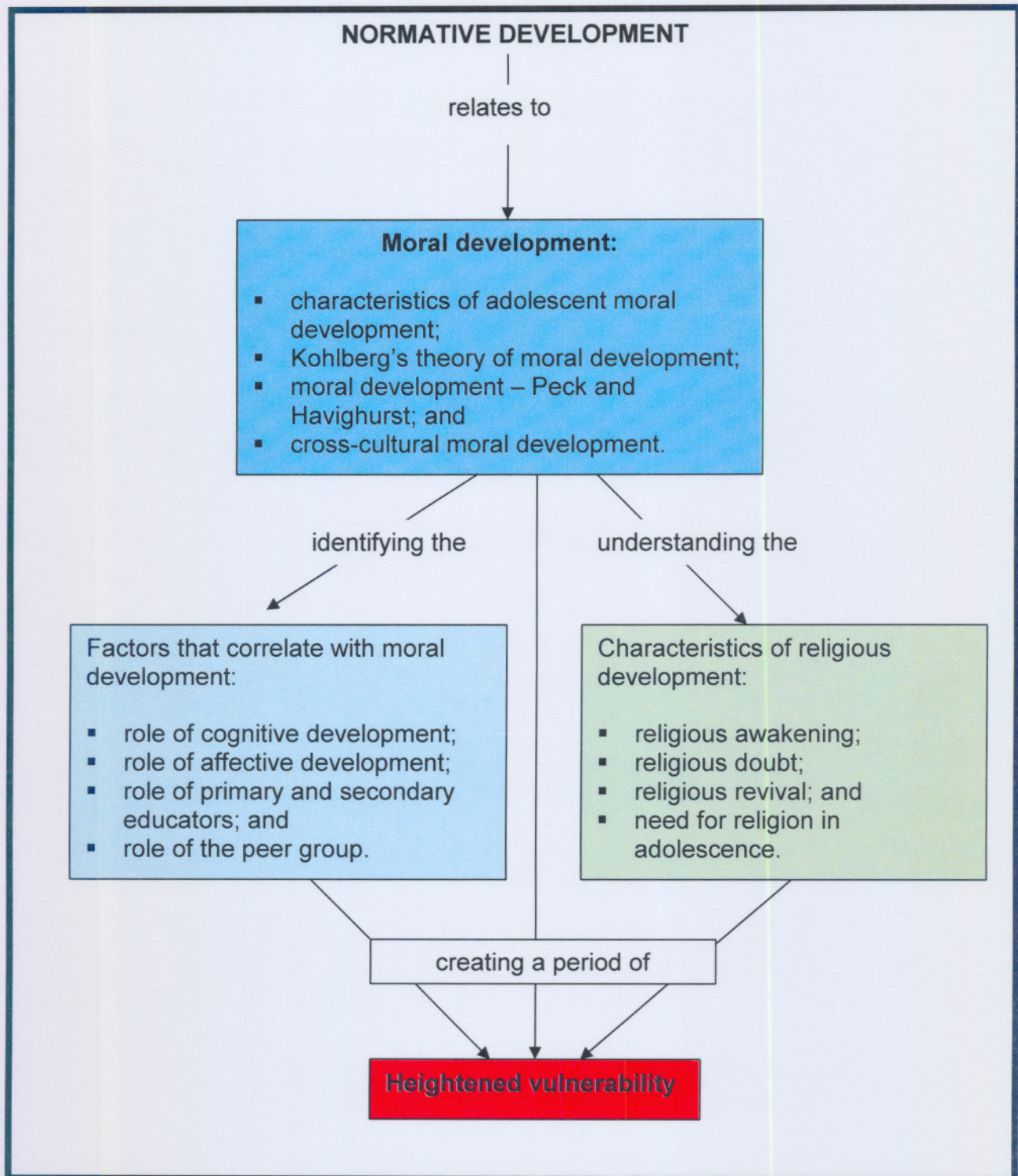
- youth who wish to escape the over-crowding and poverty of their homes seek a life in street gangs;
- youth gangs offer an opportunity for material advancement in the absence of possible employment;
- gangs arise out of the need for entertainment and excitement;
- gangs provide emotional and material support; and
- the sense of power, status and belonging of a gang is appealing.

If the adolescent attains emotional independence from her parents too early, the result may be detrimental to the parent-child relationship. Furthermore, the separation may be instrumental in the adolescent's participation in high-risk and undesirable behaviour such as substance abuse, promiscuous sexual activity or juvenile delinquency (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 73). However, excessive dependence can also impair the adolescent's social, emotional and conative development, causing her to lack self-confidence and initiative.

2.3.5 The Domain of Normative Development

Normative development can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2.17 The domain of normative development



It is an important developmental task of adolescence to establish a personal value system that is in line with the guidelines, principles, rules and norms of society. Furthermore, it is crucial for adolescents to attain normative maturity in order to assess good and evil, and ultimately to regulate their behaviour (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 95).

2.3.5.1 Moral development

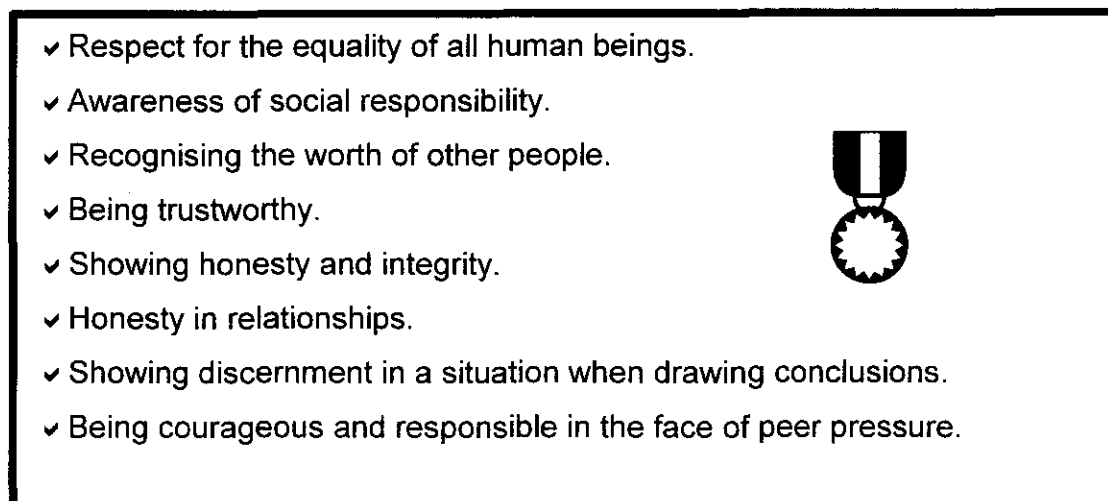
Morals refer to habits, customs or patterns of behaviour that conform to the standard of the group which help individuals to distinguish between right and wrong. Some of these morals are formalised and written as statutes, while others are established by usage and tradition (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 101). Sound moral development can prevent the problems associated with high-risk behaviour such as delinquency, promiscuous sexual behaviour and substance abuse.

According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 101), morals are not inherited. Instead, they are acquired through learning and the adolescent is familiarised with the accepted morals of her society from early childhood. Family influences do, however, have a direct effect on the moral development of the adolescent and these are independent of the effects of personality, income and other factors (Hart, Atkins & Ford, 1999: 4). As the adolescent strives to gain moral independence and to make moral decisions, she is obliged to include moral concepts (right and wrong) as well as factual beliefs (true and false), and once her decision is made she is obliged to be accountable for her choices (Wainryb, 2000: 33). The acquisition of moral independence is significant as it allows the adolescent to become less dependent on her parents and peers to make her moral decisions. This implies that the adolescent should evolve a system of values that will regulate her thinking and behaviour.

Conscience, a uniquely human and inherent ability, plays a crucial role in the development of a personal value system, as it is the inherent ability to distinguish between right and wrong, proper and improper. However, the conscience is influenced by teachings, habits and education while its function can change and diminish in certain circumstances (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 101).

The following figure is a summary of some of the values that the adolescent may adopt according to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 101).

Figure 2.18 Values that the adolescent may adopt



2.3.5.1.1 Characteristics of the adolescent's moral development

Moral values of significant adults such as educators and parents are easily accepted by children. Gradually the adolescent begins to realise that these people are fallible. As the adolescent becomes increasingly aware of this, she reacts to adults' general behaviour and not to their verbal utterances. As the child grows and develops into an adolescent, her framework of reference becomes a set of autonomous moral precepts that have been evolved and are in keeping with adults' moral values (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 102).

As the adolescent's thinking becomes more flexible and abstract, she can deal with a variety of complicating factors in deciding moral issues. The adolescent becomes able to develop a more critical, objective and rational approach to moral values (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 102).

Hurlock in Gouws *et al.* (2000: 103) summarises the most important points regarding morality during adolescence. These include:

- the adolescent's moral perception becomes more abstract and less concrete;
- the adolescent develops a greater concern for what's right and less for what is wrong;
- justice is a dominant force;
- moral judgements become increasingly cognitive;
- the adolescent is able to analyse social and personal codes in earnest and to make decisions;
- moral judgements become less egocentric; and
- moral judgements become increasingly strenuous causing tension

2.3.5.1.2. Theories of moral development

there are various theories of moral development. These include:

- Kohlberg's theory;
- Peck and Havighurst's theory; and
- Cross-cultural theory.

Each will be discussed individually below.

□ Kohlberg's theory of moral development

Kohlberg's (1978) theory of moral development is significant and relevant to the study of moral development as it focuses on the value of autonomy during adolescence; this theory expands on Piaget's development model. Kohlberg concluded that moral development is closely linked to cognitive development – moral development is divided into three levels, which are then subdivided into six stages.

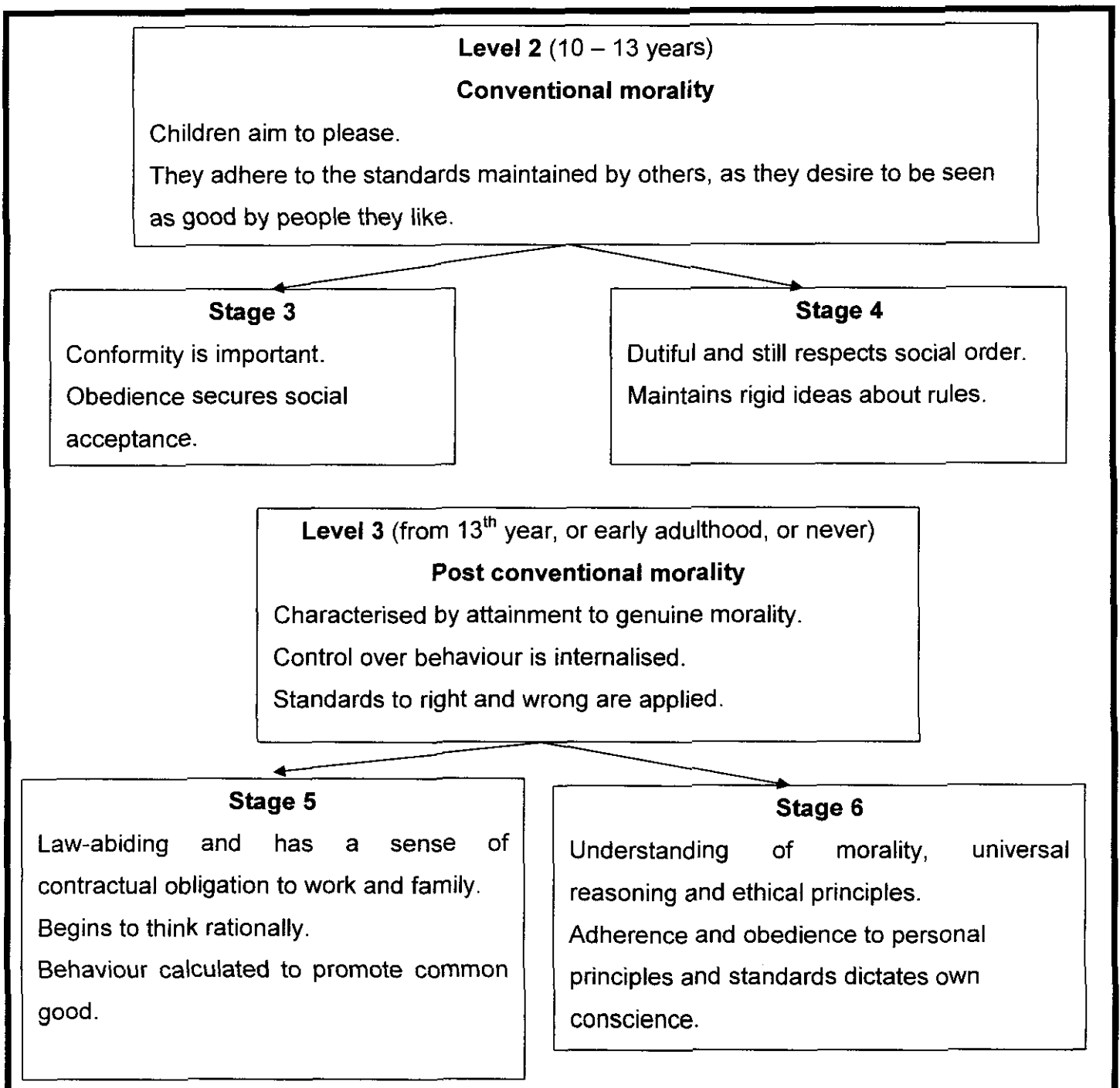
- Level 1: Pre conventional morality (age 4 – 10 years)
- Level 2: Conventional morality (age 10 –13 years)
- Level 3: Post conventional morality (from 13th year to adulthood, or never)

The attainment of these stages is not necessarily age-related although it is closely related to developmental stages. The adolescent will experience moral development concomitantly to the cognitive, social and affective changes that she is undergoing. It is also possible that the stages of moral development

overlap and this will be reflected in the adolescent's judgement (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 104; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 347).

The latter two levels are significant for understanding and studying adolescent moral development. The specific stages related to the levels that are relevant to the moral development of the adolescent are presented in the following summative diagram (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 104).

Figure 2.19 Kohlberg's levels of moral development



❑ **Moral development - Peck and Havighurst**

According to Peck and Havighurst, five stages of moral development exist and they propose that individuals can fixate at any of these levels. Furthermore they are in agreement with Piaget's view that, with adequate educational assistance people can rise to a higher level of moral judgement. Various factors influence adolescent moral development. These include parents, school, peer group, cognitive and affective development (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 179). These stages are not chronological and they do not necessarily correspond to age.

The five stages are as follows:

Stage 1 – Amoral type

At this stage the person is very egocentric, the individual tends to be disorganised and unhappy and maintains little control over her impulses.

Stage 2 – Compliant type

These individuals fear punishment and thus submit to society. They display consideration, but are inwardly selfish.

Stage 3 – Conforming type

Public approval is important to people at this stage. They are also submissive to authority.

Stage 4 – Irrational-dutiful type

The individuals establish their own standards of right and wrong and comply with these.

Stage 5 – Rational-unselfish type

Such individuals are concerned with others and are able to be strong leaders and benefactors.

❑ **Cross-cultural moral development**

Fern and Thom (2001: 38) propose that the nature of morality is determined by social, cultural and historical factors and may therefore differ

cross-culturally.

According to cultural relativists morality is a concept that is relative to a specific culture (Fern & Thom, 2001: 39). Morality and thus the moral development of the adolescent has to do with those values, norms, attitudes and patterns of behaviour that are laid down by a given society, and which are, therefore, considered to be acceptable.

Fern and Thom (2001: 40) state that the moral development of white South African adolescent boys and girls correlates with Stages 2 to 5 as Kohlberg (1969; 1984) describes in his theory of moral development. This is ascribed to the socialising of white adolescents in South Africa according to Western values and norms, whereby white adolescents develop their moral reasoning from a stage of reasoning based on external moral principles to a higher stage of reasoning where internalised moral principles are accepted (Stage 5).

In contrast, the black South African adolescents do not show the moral developmental pattern that Kohlberg has described (Fern & Thom, 2001: 40). These adolescents develop from Stage 2 ("naive hedonistic and instrumental orientation") to Stage 4 ("law and order orientation") of moral reasoning, which also seems to be the highest level of moral reasoning they reach as adolescents. This developmental pattern of moral reasoning among the black adolescents may be the result of socialising according to traditional black African values and norms. These are aimed at making the black adolescent an "ideal member of the community", which relates to conforming to the group and furthering the group's welfare, as well as its interdependent behaviour. This is in contrast to the Western values that emphasise self-actualisation, individualism and independent behaviour. Fern and Thom (2001: 40) conclude that in such an environment, individuals seem to show a different moral developmental pattern than that described by Kohlberg (1969) and that it is possible that Kohlberg's description of the development of "a morality of individual conscience" may be moderated by a stronger adherence to a "collective-conscience".

2.3.5.1.3 Factors that correlate with moral development

■ The role of cognitive development

Cognitive development is central to moral development, as a great degree of abstract thinking is essentially required for the development of generalised standards where the adolescent would succeed in making a shift from absolute and rigid standards to more flexible and relevant ones. Moral autonomy and the development of their own life philosophy enables the adolescent to evaluate the values advocated by their parents and significant others objectively. Moral immaturity may occur in adolescents who have cognitive limitations such as egocentrism, confusion of subjective and objective experiences, unchallenged acceptance of adult values due to feelings of inferiority or fear of adults (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 180).

■ The role of affective development

According to Gouws and Kruger (1994: 180) empathy and guilt feelings are strong emotions that emerge during adolescents' moral development. Hoffman in Gouws and Kruger (1994: 180) explains the relationship between empathy and guilt feelings. When the adolescent feels responsible for the plight of the victim, she will experience feelings of empathy; guilt later accompanies empathy even when the adolescent does not feel responsible for the victim's plight. Subsequently, failure to assist someone who is in need of assistance will stir feelings of guilt in the adolescent.

Empathy refers to the ability to visualise oneself in another person's place; in so doing, to recognise how another is feeling and to see things as others do (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 180). Adolescents learn to become aware of others and their needs and place these before their own interests and needs. This aspect of adolescent affective development plays an important role in establishing a moral system.

Gouws and Kruger (1994: 181) suggest that guilt feelings emanate through self- assessment of behaviour and thus through an inner realisation of transgression against a norm. When the adolescent realises that there is an

inconsistency in her behaviour or a conflict exists between her values and behaviour, she experiences guilt feelings.

❑ **The role of primary and secondary educators**

Parents are the primary educators who essentially influence their adolescent's moral development. Various schools of psychology explain and attribute parental influence on adolescent moral development to a number of factors. Gouws and Kruger (1994: 182) summarise the main points of departure of the four schools of psychology relating to the moral development of the adolescent.

- The *social-group theory* proposes that the adolescent will accept normative values that her parents impose on her because she wishes to gain social acceptance and approval.
- *Psychoanalysts* maintain that the superego is a reflection of parents' expectations concerning right and wrong. Therefore, the adolescent aims to meet her parents' expectations and to avoid conflict.
- The *social learning theorists* explain the acquisition of values and norms as a result of modelling and social discipline.
- According to the *cognitive-structural model*, the adolescent's constructive intellectual abilities enables her to determine for herself whether behaviour is morally acceptable or not.

Morals and social values are learned from birth and are internalised by the adolescent. Parents therefore play an instrumental role in the formation of what is right and wrong. It is thus imperative that parents set the right example through communication, mutual trust and respect to facilitate the forming of the adolescent conscience. Gouws *et al.* (2000: 101 – 103) purports that poor moral influence by parents on their children may result in their children engaging in high-risk behaviour such as juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and promiscuous sexual activity.

The school as a secondary educational institution builds on the moral development of the adolescent (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 113). The school is a microcosm of society and obedience to the rules, boundaries and norms is

imperative in order to establish the value of consequences of one's actions. Consistent discipline practised by both parents and the school is crucial for the moral development of the adolescent.

□ **The role of the peer group**

Acceptance by the peer group is essential for adolescents and as a result, the peer group is a critical determinant in the development of a value system (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 109). Recognition and acceptance by the peer group is determined by conformity to the groups' norms and values. If the groups' values are very different to those of the parents, conflict between them will result.

2.3.5.2 Religious development of the adolescent

Religion plays a crucial role in human lives as it is a spiritual bond that exists between humans and a supreme being. Religion is also instrumental in the definition of right and wrong, good and evil, as well as, proper and improper (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 116).

2.3.5.2.1 Characteristics of adolescent religious development

According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 116), adolescence is characterised by a search for spiritual fulfilment and certainty, where the meaning of life and the answers to life's questions can be found. As adolescents develop cognitively and are able to think more abstractly, they move away from the innocent unquestioning acceptance of their parents' faith. Their thought becomes more critical as they desire to think for themselves and they develop tolerance for differences in religious convictions.

Hurlock in Gouws *et al.* (2000: 117) suggests that religious interest quickens in adolescence in stages that can be described as follows:

➤ **Religious awakening**

Adolescents are often prompted to become members of their parents' religious organisation, and in so doing, become involved in its religious activities. Various rituals and ceremonies are often performed and the

adolescent would need to undergo specific religious instruction. This process may cause the adolescent to rebel against organised religion and develop scepticism, or it may encourage her to accept and practise the religion.

➤ **Religious doubt**

Through critical analysis of her religious convictions, the adolescent may grow sceptical of her religious practices or even the dogmatics of the faith. As a result she may drift away from the religion and return at a later stage or she may reject the religion and seek an alternative religion that meets her needs.

➤ **Religious revival**

As the adolescent develops, she may come to the realisation that she needs religious convictions in her life. The adolescent may return to her original religious organisation or she may become involved with religions that are in opposition to that of her parents.

2.3.5.2.2 The need for religion in adolescence

Adolescence has been described as a period of heightened vulnerability, therefore having a religion that is personal and meaningful to the adolescent during this time is very important in terms of guidance. According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 118), personal religion can provide the adolescent with a sense of hope and faith to hold on to during the uncertainties of development. Like moral values, religious views are not innate, but are essentially the outcome of what the adolescent has learned from experience and instruction.

2.3.5.3 Adolescent normative development - a time of heightened vulnerability

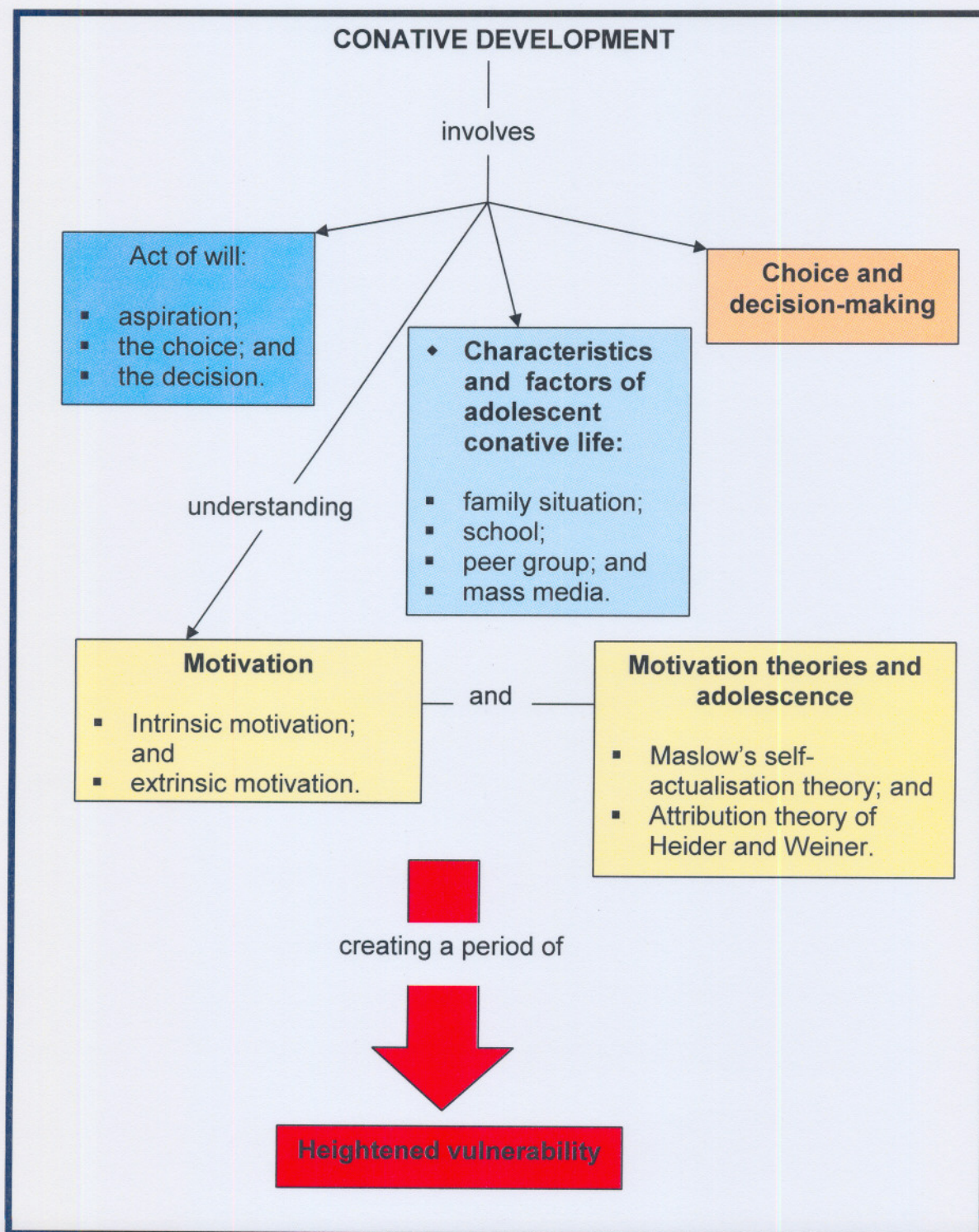
The adolescent's behaviour reflects her moral values – should the adolescent not accept the moral values of her society, she may be regarded as a rebel and may experience rejection by her peers and significant others. Juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and irresponsible sexual activity may become part of the adolescent's lifestyle and the consequences of her actions will influence her personal relationships and academic progress. Inadequate normative development may result in the adolescent's experiencing difficulties

in understanding the purpose and meaning of her life and she may live through adolescence and adulthood without specific goals and achievements.

2.3.6 The Domain of Conative Development

Conative development can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2.20 The domain of conative development

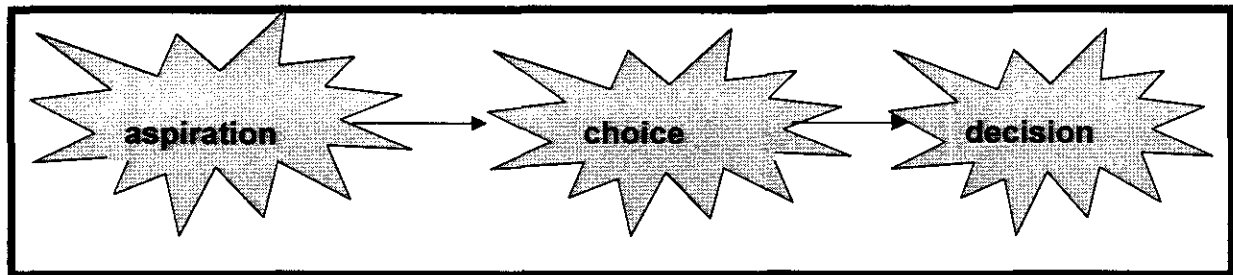


Conative development is the development of a person's will, which arises from the motivation to attain a goal. The function of the will is to actualise possibilities and to achieve a particular aim. Motivation and choice-making are thus important components of will. The adolescent is affectively, cognitively and conatively involved in every act of her own will (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 146).

2.3.6.1 The act of will

Three stages in the execution of the act of will can be identified, namely aspirations, choice and decision (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 126), as set out below:

Figure 2.21 The act of will



□ The aspiration

When the adolescent's primary needs (food, safety, clothing and shelter) are fulfilled, she will aspire towards the fulfilment of higher order needs and ultimately to self-actualisation which, according to Maslow, is the highest level that can be attained by a human being. Secondary aspirations include the adolescent's striving for success at school, status, independence and acceptance.

□ The choice

It is impossible for the adolescent to respond to all her aspirations simultaneously and she is thus confronted with a choice moment where she must determine which aspirations should be addressed first. The adolescent is challenged to make a realistic and responsible choice.

□ **The decision**

The adolescent makes a decision by an act of will when she knows what she wants and can take action in order to achieve her goal.

Five elements of a person's conative life can be differentiated (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 147):

- *knowledge* is an important cognitive element and is always present in the conative process;
- *goalsetting* refers to the vision of achievement of value, happiness and satisfaction, which eventually leads to self-actualisation;
- *choice-making* is the process whereby possibilities are weighed against one another and one is chosen;
- *act of will* is the perseverance and endurance required to put into motion the decision that was made in order to achieve the goal; and
- *attitude* is the mental state of readiness that has a direct or indirect influence on a person's actions and these prepare the way for all the adolescent's actions.

All five are needed to function conatively.

2.3.6.2 Characteristics of the adolescent's conative life

The adolescent's conative life is characterised by goal-setting that results from her aspirations and motivation to achieve the goal through making a series of choices.

Acceptance and independence are two very important goals that the adolescent strives for. This may cause the adolescent to become engaged in conflict with parents, educators and the peer group. A further characteristic of the adolescent's conative life is goal-setting, which tends to reflect unrealistic aspirations that are formed in childhood, but are soon replaced by more realistic goals as the adolescent matures (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 35). The extrinsic motivation of childhood gradually develops into the intrinsic motivation of adulthood, and the sources of motivation and their intensity will differ from one adolescent to another. As the adolescent is driven by an

aspiration, she is confronted with a choice that has to be made and this entails an act of will. The adolescent, through increasing her sense of responsibility and goal-directedness, begins to shape her own future (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 148).

2.3.6.2.1 Factors that influence the conative life of the adolescent

A number of factors can influence the conative life of the adolescent. These include (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 148):



Family situation

Parents influence the adolescent's conative life significantly. Parents set standards, they praise or admonish their adolescents if she succeeds or fails and they have ambitions for their adolescents. The parenting style and stability of the family also influences the adolescent's conative development. Stable families often produce highly motivated adolescents.



The school

Teachers play a significant role in the adolescent's conative life. If the teachers indicate a belief in the adolescent's academic potential and success, she will achieve success.



Peer group

The adolescent is strongly inclined to compare herself with the peer group and she enjoys the competition. The peer group can have an influence on the adolescent's aspirations and on the will to carry out a task successfully.



Mass media

Mass media may also influence the adolescent's conative life in that it confronts the adolescent with what is unrealistic and unattainable for her. Conversely, mass media can also exert a positive influence, as it stimulates the adolescent to aspire to certain tasks and achievements.

A further aspect of the adolescent's conative life is that of motivation.

2.3.6.3 Motivation

Motivation refers to needs, goals and desires that urge an individual to action and is made up of two components, namely movement and purpose (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 59). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are important aspects to address when establishing the power of adolescent motivation.

➤ Intrinsic motivation

Interest and intrinsic motivation are closely linked. Intrinsic motivation refers to the inner drive that urges an individual to achieve certain set goals. An intrinsically motivated individual is driven to perform, as she wants to achieve a sense of satisfaction that will result in self-actualisation. When the adolescent is interested in a particular issue or subject, she is motivated to pursue it further. Intrinsic motivation is located in the adolescent's will to enrich herself inwardly (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 59 – 61).

➤ Extrinsic motivation

According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 60), the adolescent who is extrinsically motivated takes action because something or someone has prompted her to do so and the possibility of a reward is exciting. This adolescent also shows scant enthusiasm, little initiative or creativity.

The characteristics of the intrinsically and extrinsically motivated adolescents are summarised as follows (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 61).

Table 2.1 Characteristics of intrinsically and extrinsically motivated adolescents

Intrinsically motivated	Extrinsically motivated
➤♥ The adolescent sets her own standards.	☹ The adolescent tends to be pessimistic about her chance of success.
➤♥ There is perseverance and practice.	☹ She mainly seeks to realise short-term goals.
➤♥ The adolescent wants to enrich herself inwardly and is	☹ An outsider determines her

goal- directed. ≡♥≡ She concentrates on the learning task. ≡♥≡ There is strong will to carry out the task. ≡♥≡ The adolescent is prepared to develop her talents through study. ≡♥≡ She studies with purpose and enthusiasm while pursuing realistic study objectives. ≡♥≡ She can appreciate the value and meaning of her studies for the pursuit of her career in later life.	standard for success. 🏆 The adolescent tends to be uncertain, doubts her own abilities and lacks creativity. 🏆 She strives for social approval from her peers, teachers, parents and other adults. 🏆 The adolescent is often tense and anxious about possible failure. 🏆 Career choices do not satisfy her personal needs, but rather meet the demands or desires of other people.
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A balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is important, as both play an important role in the adolescent's will to enrich herself (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 62).

Motivation can be further understood by investigating theories of motivation.

2.3.6.4 Motivation theories and the adolescent

In order to gain a better understanding of the motives underlying adolescent and thus human behaviour, Maslow's self-actualisation theory and the attribution theory of Heider and Weiner will be briefly discussed.

❑ Maslow's self-actualisation theory

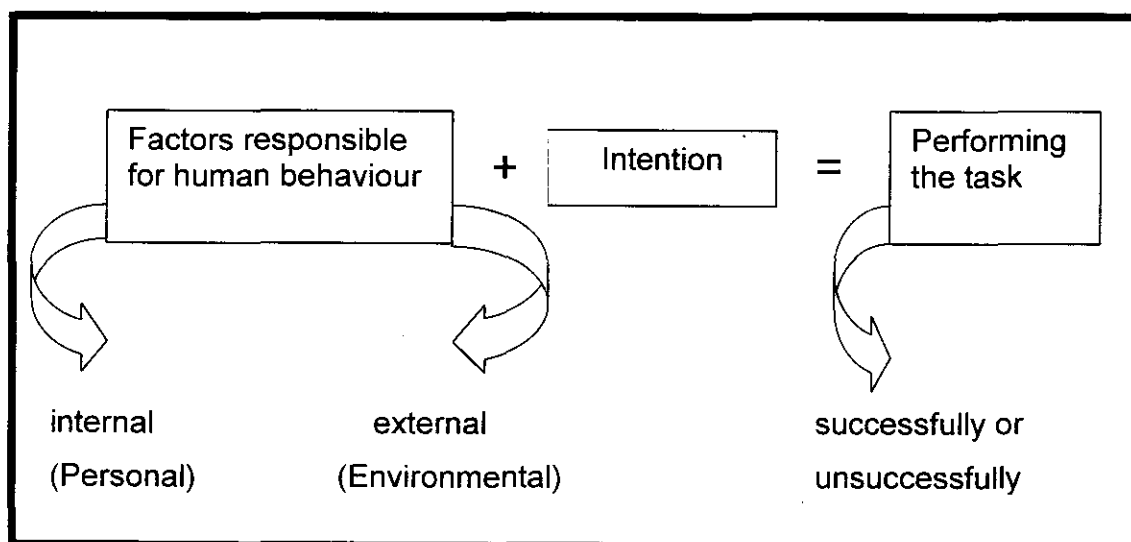
Maslow identified human needs in five categories and arranged these in order of importance. Two groups of needs are distinguishable, namely physiological and psychological. The former group encompasses the two basic needs of the physical and of safety, while social needs, the need for appreciation/esteem and the self-actualisation are the higher-order psychological needs. According

to Maslow, the needs at the bottom of the hierarchy need to be satisfied before needs higher up will motivate behaviour.

For the adolescent who is undergoing the transition to adulthood satisfying the physiological needs is a prerequisite for further becoming. The adolescent's sense of security is crucial to her holistic development. Motivation to action, such as learning, is very difficult if these basic needs are not met. In order for the social need to become prominent for the adolescent, the need for protection and safety should be satisfied. The need for love, acceptance and companionship is central in the affective development of the adolescent and is therefore a crucial aspect of conative development. The failure to fulfil this need may lead to deviant behaviour. In order for the adolescent to achieve independence and freedom, the need for appreciation or esteem must be fulfilled. The adolescent desires recognition as a person in good standing as with the society – respect and approval are of the utmost importance. When the adolescent attains self-actualisation, she has successfully satisfied the needs in the hierarchy and is now able to display actions that are intrinsically motivated. She will seek opportunities that are most advantageous to the utilisation of her abilities (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 154).

□ Attribution Theory of Heider and Weiner

Figure 2.22 Attribution Theory of Heider and Weiner



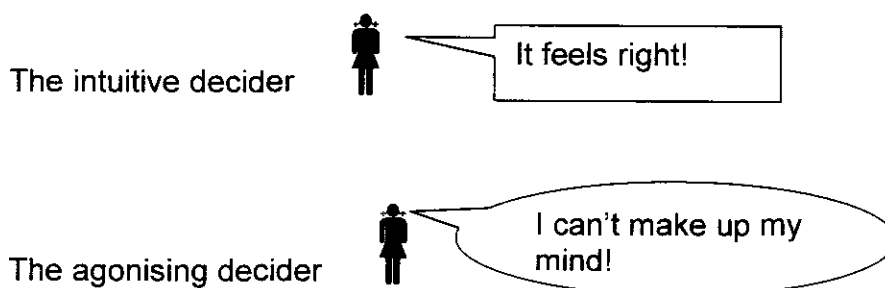
According to Heider, behaviour is attributable to internal or external factors. These factors are separately or jointly responsible for human behaviour. These factors function in conjunction with intention, resulting in the successful performance of the task (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 155).

According to Weiner, the realisation of an adolescent's short- or long-term expectations depends mainly on what she attributes her success to. Attribution is affected by the following four factors (Mellet in Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 155):

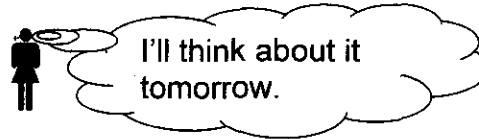
- the adolescent's abilities: success and failure determine the adolescent's abilities as this defines whether the adolescent thinks she can or cannot succeed;
- the degree of difficulty of the task:: if the task is performed successfully and the adolescent receives praise for this she will perceive the task as easy;
- the person's effort or perseverance: the amount of time that the adolescent is willing to devote to the task; and
- the part played by coincidence: the success of further tasks depends on whether the adolescent feels that she has succeeded due to luck or to accident.

2.3.6.5 Choice and decision-making

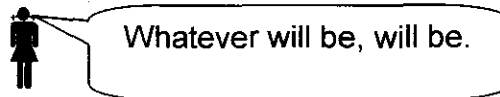
According to Gouws *et al.* (2000: 126), a choice is the result of the act of choosing while reaching a decision. As individuals may reach a decision in various ways, five types of deciders can be identified.



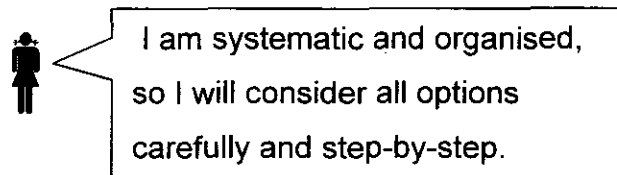
The delaying decider



The fatalistic decider



The systematic decider



Four principles in decision-making can be differentiated. These are (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 127 – 128):

- aims and values – the objective of the decision;
- information – various possibilities need to be weighed out against each other;
- solutions – possible solutions should be considered; and
- decision – the decision is made and action is taken.

Successful decision-making and beneficial choices are important during adolescence, as these will have both short- and long-term effects for the adolescent.

2.3.6.6 Adolescent conative development - a time of heightened vulnerability

Adolescence is a period of extreme changes in all domains of development and each domain exerts an intricate influence on the other. The domain of conative development has a significant influence on the adolescent's social, cognitive and affective domains. Conative development plays a role in the formation of the adolescent's self-concept and self-esteem. In turn, inadequate development of motivation and the will to act may adversely affect

the success of friendship forming, as well as, relationship forming between adolescents of opposite gender.

Academic success is also largely dependent on the adolescent's level of motivation and will to act. When the adolescent feels that she wants to participate in an activity, she will enjoy more success than if she feels forced to. The aspect of choice and decision-making is a crucial aspect of the conative development of an adolescent. This also places the adolescent in a state of heightened vulnerability, as she will be held accountable and responsible for the decisions she makes. Should she choose to follow a high-risk lifestyle all domains of her development will be affected to a larger or lesser degree.

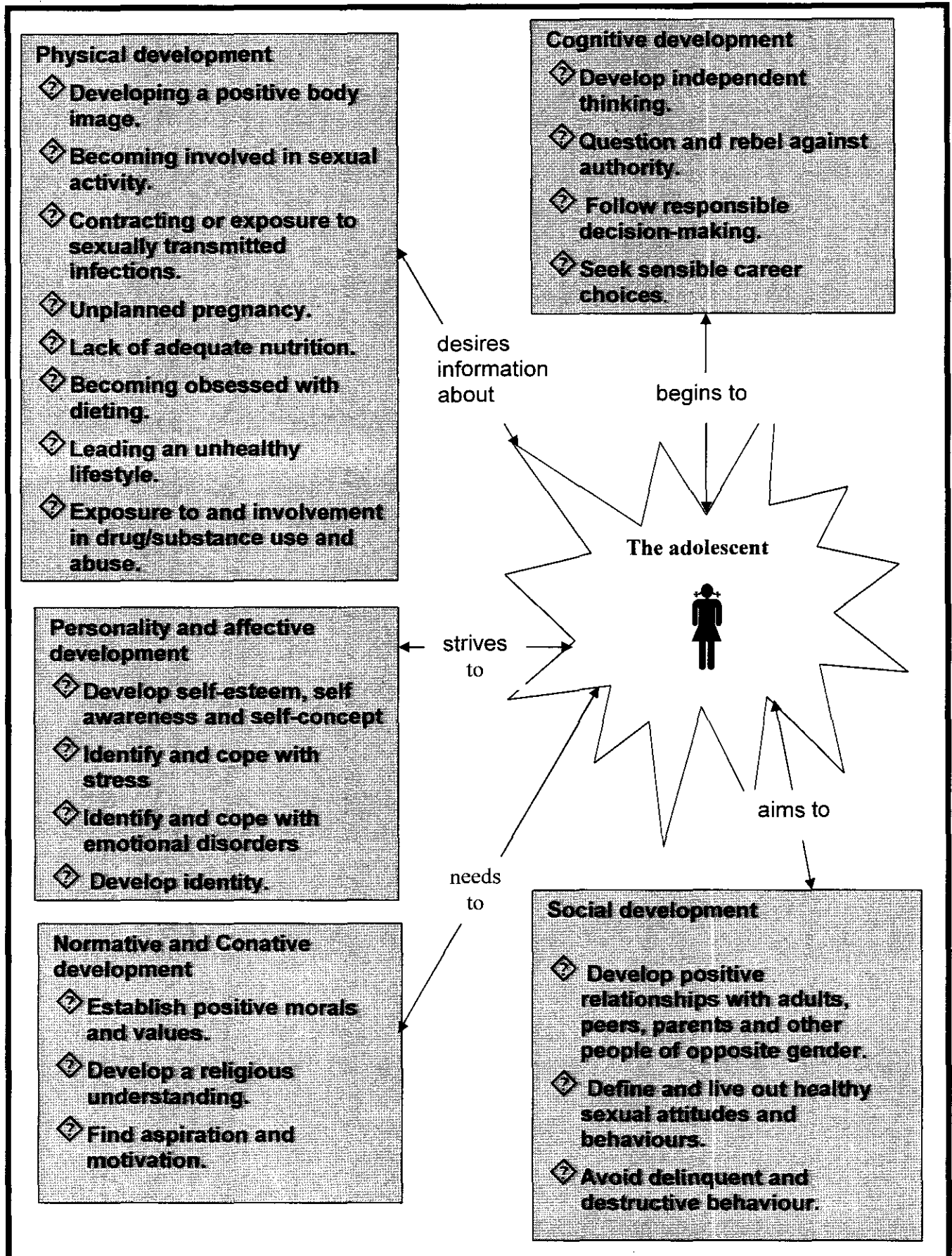
2.4 CONCLUSION

It is vital that the adolescent is presented with a Life skills programme that will ultimately create a better understanding for her about the aspects of change that she will experience during her teen years. A holistic understanding of her physical, cognitive, social, affective, normative and conative development, as well as the risks that can create a period of heightened vulnerability, will equip the adolescent to deal responsibly with the challenges faced during adolescence.

A summary of the challenges with which the adolescent may be presented during this period of heightened vulnerability is represented in the figure below.

The following chapter outlines the learning area of Life Orientation.

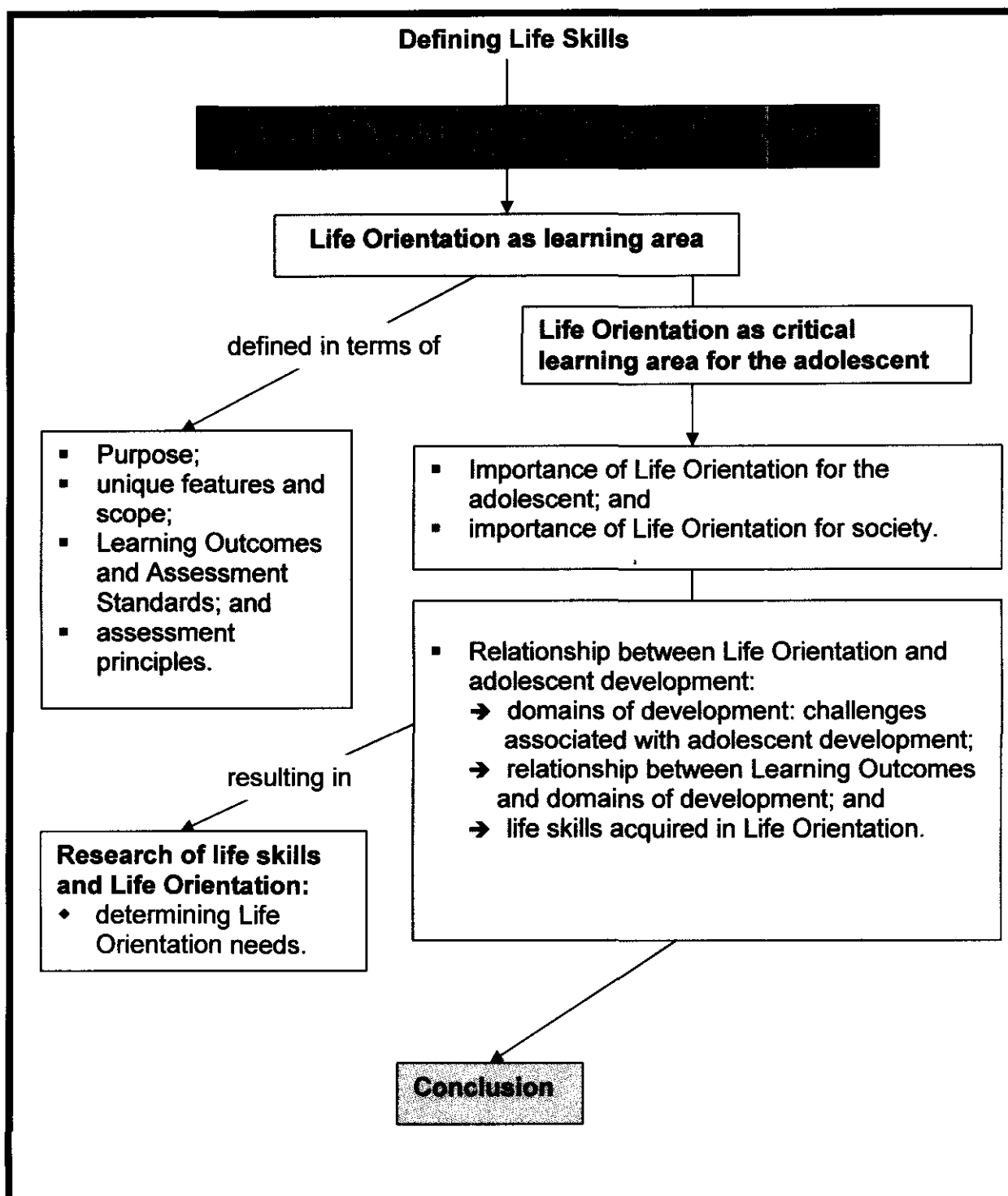
Figure 2.23 The vulnerabilities and challenges created by changes in the various domains of development



CHAPTER 3

LIFE ORIENTATION: A LEARNING AREA TEACHING LIFE SKILLS

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW



Curriculum 2005 is the prescribed education curriculum driving the process of educational transformation in South Africa (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 87; Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999: 21). The national curriculum, which is defined on the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa (Department of Education, 2002: 1; Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1999: 2;). Curriculum 2005 emphasises the integration of the eight learning areas, namely Arts and Culture; Economic and Management Sciences; Human and Social Sciences; Language, Literacy and Communication; Life Orientation; Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Sciences; Natural Sciences and Technology (Department of Education, 2002, 1). This transformation installed Life Skills Education as an integral component of Life Orientation (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 87). The following chapter aims at presenting and addressing the following questions:

- ❑ How are life skills defined and what is the rationale behind the teaching of life skills?
- ❑ What is South Africa's interpretation of Life Skills Education?
- ❑ Why is the learning area Life Orientation critical to the adolescent?

The above information is discussed with regard to the adolescent, as this is the focus of this study. Therefore no mention will be made of life skills for foundation or intermediate phase learners.

3.2 DEFINING LIFE SKILLS

Life skills are the skills that are necessary for successful living and learning that enhance the quality of life and prevent dysfunctional behaviour. Life skills include coping skills, which are in turn necessary for the successful management of stressful situations (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 43; Donald *et al.*, 2002: 156; Rooth, 2000: 1; Du Toit *et al.*, 1997: 6).

Life skills refer to any skill that enables a person to interact meaningfully and successfully with the environment and with other people. Life skills thus give people the tools they need for perceiving or responding to diverse life

situations and achieving their personal goals (Junge *et al.*, 2003: 165; Rooth, 2000: 1). According to Kadish, Glaser, Calhoun, Georgia and Ginter (2001: 2), life skills refer to all the skills and knowledge prerequisite to the development and improvement of the individual's personal competencies that are needed for effective living and participation in the community.

Life skills are further defined as non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that should be acquired in order to achieve success in society (Junge *et al.*, 2003: 166). Again these skills enable the individual to adapt to and master her life situations at home, at school, at work and in any other context in which she may find herself (Junge *et al.*, 2003: 166; Donald *et al.*, 2002: 156).

According to Nelson-Jones (1993: 10), life skills are the component skills through which people assume personal responsibility for their lives. Above all, life skills are self-helping skills that enable people to be empowered rather than disempowered. Nelson-Jones (1993: 10) identifies the characteristics of life skills as the following:

- life skills are conducive to mental wellness;
- life skills possess a psychological component;
- life skills are processes; and
- people require a repertoire of life skills.

A number of factors may influence how a person will learn and maintain life skills (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 68; Nelson-Jones, 1993: 16 – 19). These include:

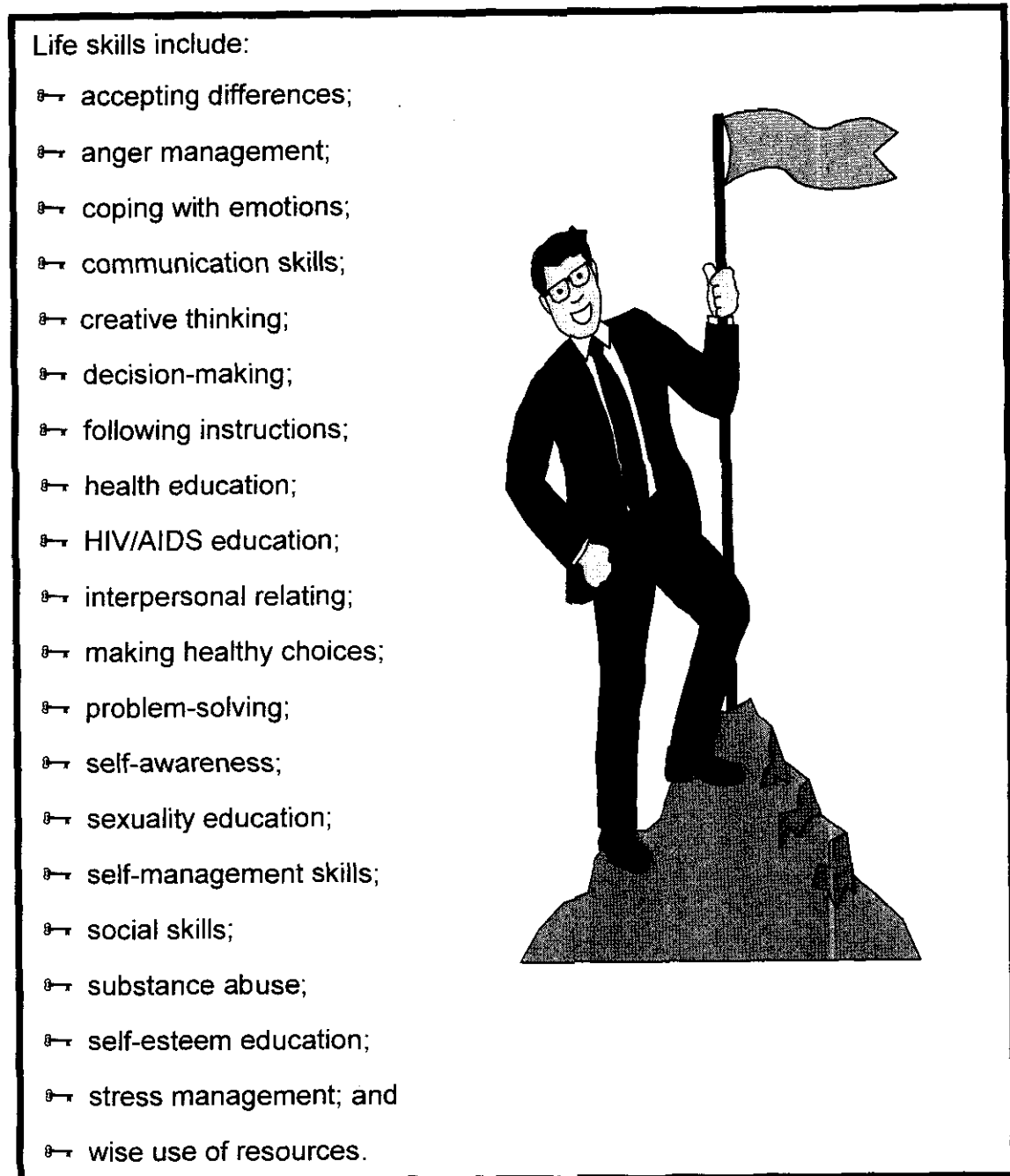
- supportive relationships – which encourage a person to meet the challenges set by the practice of life skills;
- active participation – which enables a person to acquire life skills when she is able to practise these;
- learning from example – observing people in real situations which teaches a person effective life skills;

- learning from consequences – evaluating and understanding previous actions and the consequences thereof which can teach a person how to improve her life skills;
- instruction (physical demonstrations) and self-instruction – teaching and learning life skills through rehearsal and role-play are instrumental tools when; and
- information and opportunity – regarding life skills and how to use them effectively will empower a person to cope in a variety of life situations.

People, and adolescents in particular, are empowered when they possess a greater range of skills. When adolescents are aware of various alternatives and opportunities that are available when perceiving or responding to life situations, the potential for meaningful and successful interaction becomes a reality (Rooth, 2000: 2). It is thus imperative to teach life skills and coping skills to the adolescent so that she may experience effective functioning in the modern world, consequently promoting her psychosocial development and academic success (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 87; Junge *et al.*, 2003: 165; Donald *et al.*, 2002: 243).

A core set of life skills which meet the ideals of promoting health and well-being can be identified (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Donald *et al.*, 2002: 156; Ncgobo, 2002: 96; Rooth, 1997: 2; Du Toit, 1997: 7; Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 2). The following figure summarises a core set of life skills, which promote health and well-being:

Figure 3.1 Summary of core life skills



Ebersöhn and Eloff (2003: 46) describe the characteristics of core life skills as the following:

- these are intrapersonal in nature;
- the internalisation of these core life skills is a prerequisite for observable life-skilled behaviour; and

- these skills mean that an individual is constantly redefining herself in changing environments, and this dynamic identity formation has an impact on how she interprets and reacts to her environment.

Ultimately Life Skills Education aims to equip the individual for life inside and outside the classroom and beyond school years to enable her to:

- cope with life;
- enhance her quality of life; and
- become a fully contributing member of the wider community (ANON, 1994: 8).

The focus is on skills acquisition that results in behavioural change, social learning and taking responsibility for one's choices (Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 2).

3.3 SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERPRETATION OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Life Orientation replaced the former subjects of Life Skills and Guidance when Curriculum 2005 was implemented. Consequently Life Skills Education became an integral component of Life Orientation (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 87; Abrahams, Creighton, Naidoo, Parker, Pillay & Wegner, 2002: 2).

Life Orientation as learning area requires further definition.

3.3.1. Life Orientation learning area

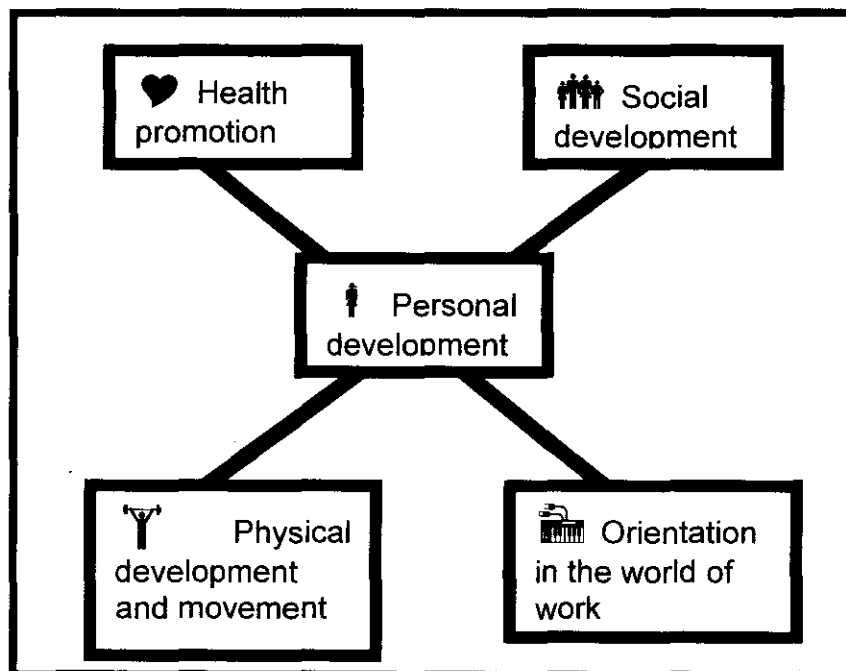
Life Orientation as a learning area aims to guide and prepare learners for a meaningful and successful life and to equip learners with the necessary coping skills to face the challenges of living in a rapidly changing and transforming society (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Maree & Fraser, 2004: 226; Department of Education, 2002: 4). The choice of the combination of the two words 'life' and 'orientation' implies that this learning area involves not only the development of the learners' insight into life knowledge, but also the development of the skills to utilise this knowledge (Maree & Fraser, 2004: 226).

The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9 (Schools) Policy (Department of Education, 2002: 4) outlines the main focus of the Life Orientation learning area as the development of self-in-society and above that, it envisages the holistic development of learners. It is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical development of the learner and with the way in which these domains of development are interrelated. Furthermore, this learning area's vision of individual growth is part of an effort to create:

- ✓ a democratic society;
- ✓ a productive economy; and
- ✓ an improved quality of life.

The Life Orientation learning area aims to develop skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that empower learners to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions regarding the following five focus areas:

Figure 3.2 Five focus areas of Life Orientation



These five focus areas of the Life Orientation learning area address human and environmental rights outlined in the South African Constitution

(Department of Education, 2002: 4). The purpose of Life Orientation is thus multifaceted.

3.3.1.1 The purpose of Life Orientation

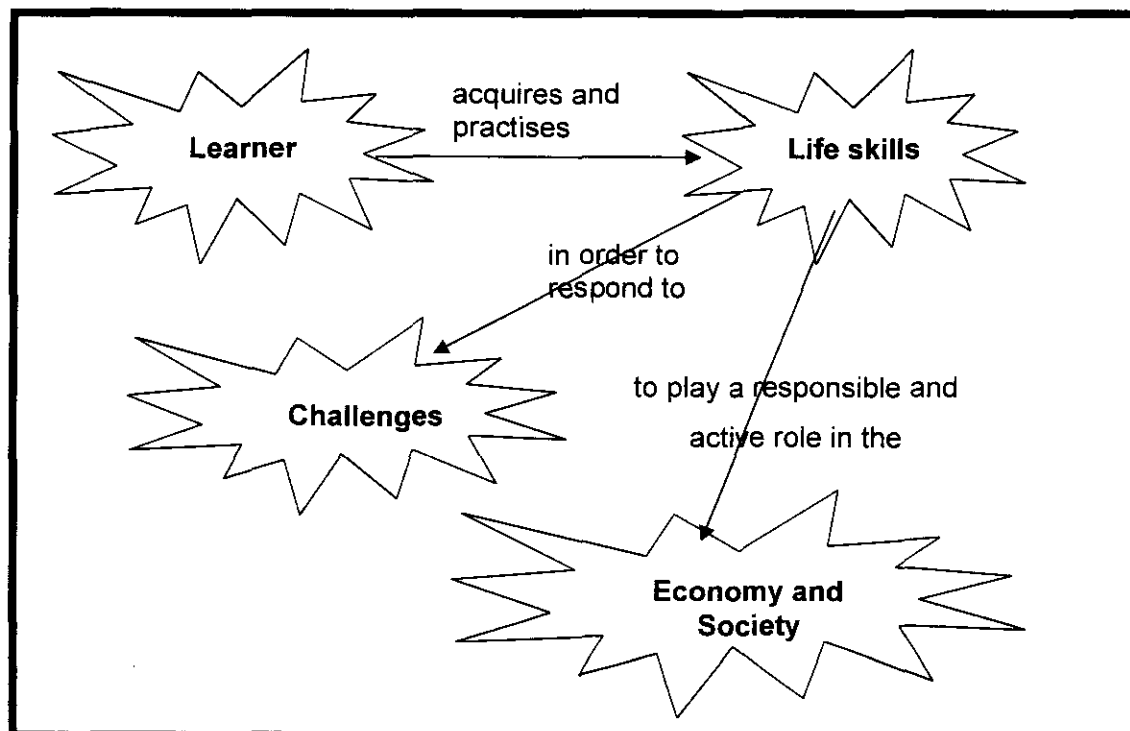
The principle purpose of the Life Orientation learning area as set out by the Department of Education (2002: 4) is to empower learners to use their talents to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. A further purpose of Life Orientation is that learners will acquire and develop the necessary skills to relate positively and make a contribution to family, community and society, while practising the values embedded in the Constitution. In addition to this, the Life Orientation learning area will enable learners to make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment.

Ultimately Life Orientation aims to teach learners to:

- ✓ exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities;
- ✓ respect the rights of others; and
- ✓ show tolerance for cultural and religious diversity in order to build a democratic society.

The results of the purpose of Life Orientation are summarised in the figure below.

Figure 3.3 Results of the purpose of Life Orientation



3.3.1.2 Unique features and scope of Life Orientation

The Life Orientation learning area focuses on the holistic development of learners by focussing on the following aspect of development (Department of Education, 2002: 5 – 6).

👤 Self-in-society

The South African society is characterised by the challenges of socio-political change and socio-economic development that includes appreciating civil, political, social and economic rights, as well as coping with the increasing rate of unemployment and environmental degradation. This is a complex and challenging society where crime and violence affects virtually every community, school and individual. In addition to this, environmental issues also affect the health and well-being of many communities. Learners need to develop a sense of confidence and competence in order to live successfully and contribute productively to the shaping of a new society.

3.3.1.3 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards for Life Orientation

The Learning Outcomes for Life Orientation that address the developmental needs of the adolescent in society, as well as the Assessment Standards that measure the learner's success are outlined in the following five focus areas as determined in The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9 (Schools) Policy (Department of Education, 2002: 40 – 49). The following section will focus primarily on the Assessment Standards prescribed for Grade 9 learners.

❑ Learning Outcome 1:

- ♥ Health promotion: the learner will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health.

Senior Phase learners are exposed to a wider range of risky situations. Health and safety issues encountered are still affected by the physical and socio-

economic environment. The learner should acquire the necessary life skills to make informed choices. The learner needs to develop a healthy lifestyle, informed by environmental awareness and by other health and safety aspects. Sound health practices and an understanding of the relationship between health and environment can improve the quality of life and well-being of learners. This Learning Outcome addresses issues relating to nutrition, diseases including HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, safety, violence, abuse and environmental health.

☒ **Assessment Standards**

The learner has achieved Learning outcome 1 when she:

- ♥ illustrates and evaluates the influence of ecological, social, economic, cultural and political factors on own personal choice of diet;
- ♥ develops and implements an environmental health programme;
- ♥ investigates personal and social factors that contribute to substance abuse and suggests appropriate responses and rehabilitation options;
- ♥ critically evaluates resources on health information, health services and a range of treatment options, including those for HIV/AIDS; and
- ♥ discusses ways to apply insights gained from participating in an activity related to national health or a safety promotion programme.

☐ **LEARNING OUTCOME 2:**

 **Social development:** the learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.

In order to guide learners towards successful living in a democratic society, showing acceptance of diversity and commitment to democratic values this learning area statement deals with human rights as contained in the South African constitution. During the Senior Phase, peers increasingly influence the learner, while the family continues to play an important role. Furthermore, the

learner is engaged in a variety of social activities and should be encouraged to participate in civic and human rights programmes. Knowledge of diverse cultures and religions will also contribute to the learner's own orientation in the world, and enable the making of informed decisions on human rights, social relationships and moral issues.

☒ **Assessment Standards**

The learner has achieved Learning Outcome 2 when she:

- ✎ debates issues with regard to citizens' rights and personal choices;
- ✎ reports on participation in or planning of the local celebration of a national day;
- ✎ critically discusses social relationships in a variety of situations;
- ✎ critically investigates issues of diversity in South Africa and ways in which to promote understanding of diverse cultures; and
- ✎ reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace.

☐ **Learning Outcome 3:**

✎ **Personal development:** the learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.

Personal development is central to learning, and equips learners to contribute positively to community and society. This Learning Outcome focuses on life skills development, emotional development, self-concept formation and self-empowerment. Adolescence is marked by emotional and physical changes. The learner needs to continue the formation of a positive self-concept, while acceptance by the peer group is still very important. However, the learner needs opportunities to develop further life skills. It is necessary to develop emotional intelligence, to empower the learner in order to cope with challenges.

☒ **Assessment Standards**

The learner has achieved Learning Outcome 3 when she:

- † analyses and reflects on positive personal qualities in a range of contexts;
- † critically discusses own rights and responsibilities in interpersonal relationships;
- † responds appropriately to emotions in challenging situations;
- † explains what has been learned from a challenging personal interaction by critically reflecting on own behaviour;
- † applies goal-setting and decision-making strategies; and
- † critically evaluates own application of problem-solving skills in a challenging situation.

☐ **Learning Outcome 4:**

Y Physical development and movement: the learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and participation in activities that promote movement and physical development.

Physical and motor development is an integral aspect of the holistic development of learners. It makes a significant contribution to learners' social, personal and emotional development. Play, movement, games and sport contribute to developing positive attitudes and values towards oneself and other people. This subdivision of Life Orientation focuses on perceptual motor development, games and sport, physical growth and development and recreation and play.

The Senior Phase learner is entering adolescence and experiences rapid physical change. The refinement of movements is aimed at developing precision and agility. These are to be emphasised in different situations. Lifelong participation in physical activities promoting fitness needs to be encouraged.

☒ **Assessment Standards**

The learner has achieved Learning Outcome 4 when she:

- Y participates in and evaluates own performance in an adventurous recreational outdoor activity;
- Y refines and evaluates own and peer movement performance including rotation, balance and elevation;
- Y assesses own physical wellness level and sets personal goals for improvement; and
- Y critically evaluates and executes a game plan for individual or team sport. Reports on and discusses sport ethics.

Learning Outcome 5:

-  Orientation in the world of work: the learner will be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices.

Work is an essential aspect of leading a meaningful life. All learners in the General Education and Training Band (GETB) require a general orientation to work and further study, whether they intend to enter employment or study further or not. In order to make a career and study choice at the end of the GETB phase, learners will need career information from a range of learning areas. This Learning Outcome of Life Orientation focuses on career-gathering and planning skills, self-knowledge, general work and further study, and work ethics. While study skills and work ethics are addressed in the earlier phases, in the Senior Phase the learner needs to make choices for further study and the world of work. In order to achieve successfully this, the learner needs a realistic understanding of own abilities, interests and aptitudes. The learner needs to be informed about the range of options for further study, and be orientated to the world of work.

☒ **Assessment Standards**

The learner has achieved Learning Outcome 5 when she:

- 📖 researches study and career-funding providers;
- 📖 motivates own career and study choices;
- 📖 critically reflects and reports on opportunities in the workplace;
- 📖 discusses rights and responsibilities in the workplace; and
- 📖 outlines a plan for own lifelong learning.

The learner needs to be assessed on her ability to achieve the set Learning Outcomes of this learning area by means of assessment principles that have been outlined in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R - 9 (Schools) Policy (Department of Education, 2002: 52 – 54).

3.3.1.4. Assessment principles used in Life Orientation

Assessment in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R - 9 (Schools) Policy (Department of Education, 2002: 52) is a continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the Assessment Standards of the Learning Outcomes. It requires clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies to enable teachers to give constructive feedback to learners, parents and other interested people.

Assessment is essential to all learning areas of OBE because it must be possible to assess when a learner has achieved what is required in each grade. To help learners to reach their full potential, assessment should be:

- transparent and clearly focused;
- integrated with teaching and learning;
- based on predetermined criteria or standards;
- varied in terms of methods and contexts; and
- valid, reliable, fair, learner-paced and flexible enough to allow for expanded opportunities.

For assessment to be comprehensively understood, the following facets require elucidation:

- ❑ types and purpose of assessment;
- ❑ Continuous Assessment; and

□ Common Tasks for Assessment.

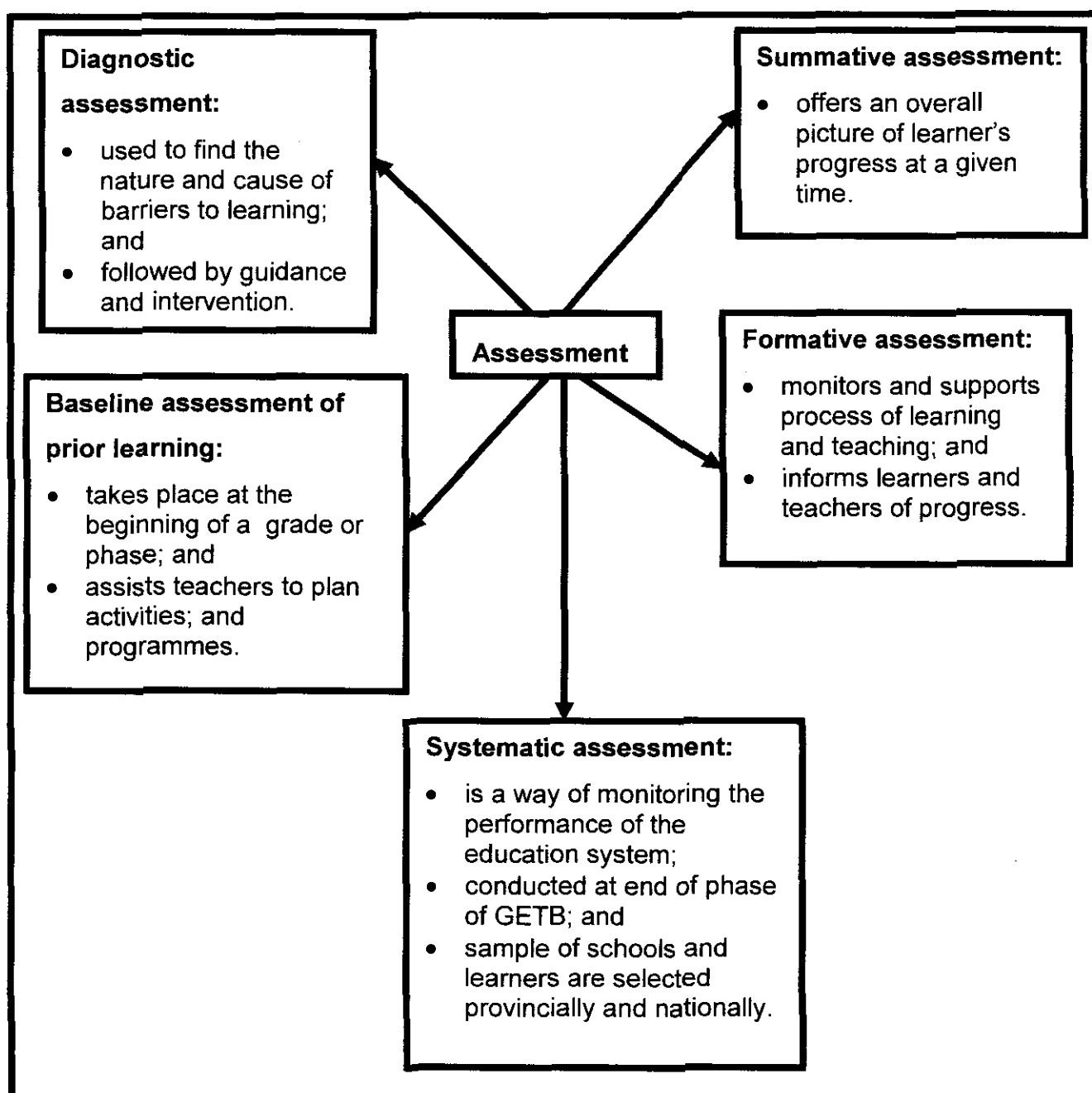
3.3.1.4.1 Types and purpose of assessment

The main purposes of assessing learners should be to:

- enhance individual growth and development;
- monitor the progress of learners; and
- facilitate their learning.

Other uses of assessment are represented in the figure below.

Figure 3.4 Types of assessment



The above are all utilised within the confines of Continuous Assessment.

3.3.1.4.2. Continuous Assessment

Continuous Assessment is the chief method by which assessment takes place in the Revised National Curriculum Statement. It covers all the Outcomes-Based Education assessment principles and ensures that assessment:

- takes place over a period of time and is ongoing: learning is assessed regularly and records of learners' progress are frequently updated;
- supports the growth and development of learners: learners become active in learning and assessment, understand the criteria for evaluation, and are involved in self-evaluation;
- provides feedback from learning and teaching: feedback includes comments on what was intended to be achieved by the assessment activity;
- allows for integrated assessment: it includes related Learning Outcomes within a single activity and combines a number of different assessment methods;
- uses strategies that cater for a variety of learners' needs: allows teachers to accommodate learners with special needs and to apply flexible teaching and assessment approaches; and
- allows for summative assessment: the accumulation of results of Continuous Assessment activities provides a comprehensive picture of the learner's progress over a given time.

Life Orientation outcomes need to be continuously assessed.

3.3.1.4.3. Common Tasks for Assessment

In Grade 9 assessment occurs according to common tasks. Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) may be set at national, provincial, district or cluster level, and are conducted at school level are moderated externally.

The purpose of Common Tasks for Assessment is to:

- ensure consistency in teacher judgements;
- promote common standard setting;

- strengthen the capacity for school-based Continuous Assessment;
- increase the accuracy of the assessment process and tools;
- ensure that the school-based assessment tasks properly assess competencies and achievements; and
- ensure expanded opportunities for learners.

Assessment in Life Orientation is new. Previously, Life Skills (or Guidance) was not formally assessed. Assessment lends credence to the understanding that Life Orientation forms a crucial part of Curriculum 2005. More significantly, it is a critical learning area for the adolescent.

3.4. LIFE ORIENTATION AS A CRITICAL LEARNING AREA FOR THE ADOLESCENT

Adolescence is understood to be a period of heightened vulnerability, and purported to be the most challenging and complicated period of life to describe, to study and more importantly to experience Berger (2003: 430). Adolescence is recognised as a difficult developmental stage because it is characterised by the complexities and diversities of the adolescent's extensive physical, cognitive, social and psychological development (Berger 2003: 431; Frydenberg, 1997: 6; Mwamwenda, 1996: 63; Adams *et al.*, 1994: 6; Gouws *et al.*, 1994:3; Thom in Louw, 1993: 377). Therefore it is understood that the adolescent will face developmental tasks that will cause much excitement and growth, as well as many challenges. Unfortunately, it is during this period of heightened vulnerability that the adolescent is often tempted to participate in risk-taking behaviour, which erodes her quality of life (Malaka, 2003: 381).

This risk-taking behaviour is often associated with the adolescent as adolescence is considered a period of self-exploration and experimentation. The adolescent is thus in need of guidance and empowerment in order to meet the challenges of the developmental tasks she is presented with during this transition between childhood and adulthood (Junge *et al.*, 2003: 166; Rooth, 2000: 2; Du Toit *et al.*, 1997: 6; ANON, 1994: 8). By acquiring the relevant life skills during the appropriate stage of development, the adolescent

will achieve optimal functioning (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 101, Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 2).

Curriculum 2005 provides a vehicle for the navigation of this important phase of transition between childhood and adulthood in the form of the Life Orientation learning area. Life Orientation aims to empower learners to live meaningful lives in a society that demands rapid transformation (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Department of Education, 2002: 2). Consequently, Life Skills Education is a crucial division of this learning area as Life Orientation aims to develop programmes to support and reinforce skills and competencies for adulthood (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Ncgobo, 2002: 96). Furthermore, these programmes, which reinforce life skills necessary for the adolescent, are structured within the curriculum and are presented by qualified educators and experts in the caring profession, and do not require extra time on behalf of the adolescent (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 39; Ncgobo, 2002: 96).

3.4.1 The Importance of Life Orientation

Life Orientation is a significant and crucial aspect in education as its effects are two-fold. Life Orientation has an impact on the individual and, in turn, on the society.

□ The importance of Life Orientation for the adolescent

The problems of adolescence are multifaceted (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Malaka, 2003: 381). Life Orientation as a learning area is inclusive of the adolescent's physical, social, personal and cognitive development (Department of Education, 2002: 4). Life Orientation programmes can provide information concerning these areas of development. Furthermore, it can provide a safe zone for adolescents to explore their knowledge and attitudes of risk-taking behaviour, ultimately affecting and changing the negative attitudes of adolescents. In addition to this, Life Orientation can provide the opportunity for young people to talk about fears, experiences and myths they harbour about the challenges of adolescence (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Malaka, 2003: 381; Hull & Stern, 2002: 35, ANON, 1994: 8).

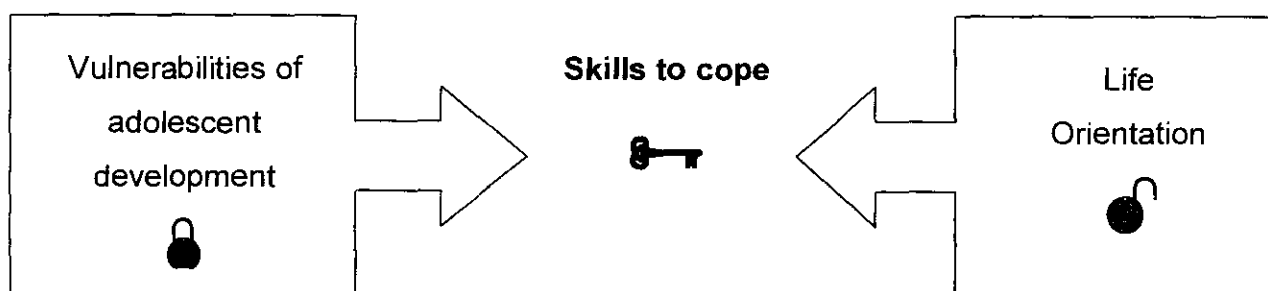
Interpersonal and intrapersonal functioning in childhood and adolescence is also linked to a wide variety of life outcomes, including academic functioning, social functioning, school drop-out, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency and mental health problems (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88, Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 47). Life Skills Education within the learning area of Life Orientation is thus crucial for the adolescent in order for her to be empowered to cope with the problems she may face during this period of heightened vulnerability.

□ The importance of Life Orientation for the society

According to Bender and Lombard (2004: 88), society pays a high price when children and young people lack social and emotional competence and skills. Social competence refers to the ability to establish acceptable and productive relationships with peers and other people (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88). In addition to this social competence has been linked with many aspects of adulthood, such as vocational competence, active involvement and participation in community development, marital satisfaction and parenting socially adjusted children (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88). According to Ebersöhn and Eloff (2003: 43), contemporary South Africa is host to numerous circumstances necessitating life skills intervention and unfortunately the mastery of life skills is currently left largely to chance in its contemporary community life. Life Skills Education is thus critical in the development of an adult society that is well adjusted and socially competent (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 43).

3.4.2 The Relationship between Life Orientation and the Domains of Adolescent Development

Life Orientation may provide the adolescent with the necessary coping and life skills to deal with the vulnerabilities and challenges that adolescence presents as suggested below:



3.4.2.1 Domains of development: challenges associated with development

During adolescence, rapid physical growth begins, reproductive organs begin to function and sexual characteristics appear. Gradually cognitive changes occur that enable the young person to move beyond concrete thought to more abstract reasoning. Simultaneously, the psychosocial changes which alter the way in which the adolescent relates to parents, friends and society take place. The following challenges may arise for the adolescent during this time of rapid transformation (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 2; Adams *et al.*, 1994: 5; Berger, 2003: 431; Amon, 2002: 143).

Physical development

Challenges include:

- developing a positive body image;
- becoming involved in sexual activity;
- contracting or exposure to sexually transmitted infections;
- unplanned pregnancy;
- lack of adequate nutrition;
- becoming obsessed with dieting;
- leading an unhealthy lifestyle; and
- exposure to and involvement in drug/substance use and abuse.

Cognitive development

Challenges include:

- developing independent thinking;
- rebellion against authority;
- responsible decision-making; and
- sensible career choices.

Personality and affective development

Challenges include:

- developing self-esteem, self awareness and self-concept;
- identifying and coping with stress;
- identifying and coping with emotional disorders; and

- development of identity.

Social development

Challenges include:

- developing positive relationships with adults, parents, peers and people of the opposite gender;
- defining and living out healthy sexual attitudes and behaviour; and
- avoiding delinquent and destructive behaviour.

Normative and conative development

Challenges include:

- establishing positive morals and values;
- developing a religious understanding; and
- understanding aspiration and motivation.

By addressing the developmental challenges of the adolescent through the teaching of life skills, the adolescent will be adequately equipped to face the developmental tasks of life.

3.4.2.2 The relationship between Learning Outcomes and domains of development

Life Orientation is central to the holistic development of learners and it aims to guide and prepare learners for life and its possibilities (Department of Education, 2002: 1). The following table summarises the domains of adolescent development and which Learning Outcomes address the challenges presented by each.

Table 3.1 A summary of the relationship between the domains of adolescent development and the Life Orientation Learning Outcomes

Life Orientation Learning Outcomes	Domains of adolescent development
♥ Health promotion	- Physical development - Cognitive development - Personality and affective development - Social development - Normative and conative development
👤 Social development	- Social development - Cognitive development - Personality and affective development - Normative and conative development
† Personal development	- Personality and affective development - Physical development - Cognitive development - Social development - Normative and conative development
⚡ Physical development and movement	- Physical development - Personality and affective development - Physical development

	▪ Cognitive development
Orientation to the world of work	▪ Cognitive development ▪ Normative and conative development ▪ Personality and affective development

From the above, it is again clear that adolescent development is multifaceted and that Life Orientation needs to cater for this by providing multiple life skills.

3.4.2.3. Life skills acquired in Life Orientation

The acquisition of the following life skills will empower the adolescent to cope with the multi-faceted nature of her development (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Ncgobo, 2002: 96; Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 2; Rooth, 2000: 2; Du Toit *et al.*, 1997: 7;). These skills are inter-related and the effective acquisition of these skills implies that the adolescent will have the tools to cope with various aspects of her development (Rooth, 2000: 15). Furthermore, education is considered to be the primary tool and schools the primary context in which adolescents can learn adaptive and positive behaviour patterns and coping skills (Abrahams *et al.*, 2002: 2). Effective life skills training needs to take place in an effort to empower the adolescent to combat some of the problems she may encounter.

Such life skills include:

➤ **Assertiveness skills**

Assertiveness is described as being active in relation to one's position or rights with others (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 130). Assertive behaviour helps the adolescent who is unduly hesitant about expressing her wants or feelings, or about standing up for her personal rights, to practise these skills (Gillis, 1994: 41).

➤ **Career education**

Career education should teach the adolescent to question, explore and understand career decision-making. The emphasis in career education is thus

on learning about, planning for and preparing to enter a career. In order to meet the needs of the adolescent, such programmes should take into account and integrate life experiences of the adolescent in order to be relevant and responsive to contextual issues (Stead & Watson, 1999: 164 – 165).

Further aims of career education are:

- to foster knowledge about courses in tertiary institutions, their links to career choices and the entry requirements;
- to provide information on a spectrum of occupations, the lifestyle associated with different work contexts and opportunities available;
- to develop self-awareness through understanding individual abilities, interests, ideals and values, developing personality characteristics which may lead to success in achieving career aspirations; and
- to practise decision-making and developing life skills for coping with transitions, for example school-to-work (Stead & Watson, 1999: 165).

➡ **Communication skills**

Communication skills are the skills needed to listen effectively and to express one's point of view in such a way that people want to listen. These skills also refer to effective listening and questioning (Vaughn, Bos & Schumm, 1997: 110). Furthermore, communication skills refer to the ability to express oneself freely and then to check if what has been said has been interpreted accurately (Gillis, 1994: 50). In addition to this, communication skills address the different levels of what people say to each other and how they communicate through their face, body and hands; in other words, both direct and indirect communication (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 117).

➡ **Creativity skills**

People can be more creative than they believe they are (Egan, 1998: 227). Creativity requires extensive knowledge, flexibility and the continual reorganising of ideas (Woolfolk, 1998: 129). In order to achieve higher levels of creativity in the adolescent, programmes should focus on imaginative and original thinking or problem-solving (Woolfolk, 1998: 130).

➡ **Conflict management skills**

Conflict management skills teach the adolescent how to deal with conflict and to identify the healthy opportunities for learning and growing that conflict provides. These skills involve:

- learning different ways of dealing with conflict;
- analysing own conflict resolution styles;
- practising different ways of solving and managing conflict; and
- discovering the most effective resolution in different situations involving different people (Rooth, 2000: 100).

➡ **Critical thinking skills**

Critical thinking skills are useful in almost every life situation. These skills focus on evaluating conclusions by logically and systematically examining the problem, the evidence and the solution (Woolfolk, 1998: 318).

➡ **Goal-setting skills**

Goal-setting skills are an important facet of self-management (Woolfolk, 1998:233). Goals are specific statements about what the adolescent wants and desires (Egan, 1998: 239). In order for goal-setting to be effective, the goals must meet the adolescent's needs and values. Furthermore, goals should be attainable and have clearly defined details of who, when and where (Gillis, 1994: 36). Goal-setting skills teaches the adolescent to:

- describe the goal;
- ascertain the purpose of the goal;
- decide where to work on the goal;
- determine how much time is needed to achieve the goal;
- divide the goal into steps; and
- keep record of the progress of each step (Vaughn *et al.*, 1997: 495).

➔ **Handling and expressing emotions**

These skills teach the adolescent how to identify and to express her emotions appropriately. Such skills should also teach the adolescent how to overcome negative emotions such as rejection, low self-esteem, hopelessness and a sense of failure, anxiety, tension and confusion (Pretorius *et al.*, 2003; 3).

➔ **Health promotion and maintenance skills**

Health promotion and maintenance skills focus on teaching the adolescent skills that will empower her to negotiate the challenges which threaten to compromise her own health and well-being (Hull & Stern, 2002: 35). Health education is multi-faceted and a number of aspects need to be addressed in order for the adolescent to achieve physical and mental well-being.

An important aspect of health promotion is mental health (Abrahams *et al.*, 2002: 2). This involves equipping the adolescent with a range of skills that increase her alternatives and opportunities to act and react in a responsible way. This includes creating an awareness of social and personal problems and empowering the adolescent with life skills needed to break away from the maladaptive cycle of mental illness and social deviance (Abrahams *et al.*, 2002: 2).

Furthermore, health promotion and maintenance skills are skills necessary for motor development and co-ordination, nutritional maintenance, weight control, physical fitness, athletic participation, physiological aspects of sexuality, stress management and leisure-activity selection (Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 3).

➔ **Interpersonal, social and group skills**

The appropriate interpersonal, social and group skills allow the adolescent to adapt and respond to the expectations of society (Vaughn *et al.*, 1997: 85). Teaching social skills implies that the adolescent should acquire skills that are directed at reducing problematic interactions with others and correctly assigning locus of control (Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 1). In addition to this, these skills refer to interpersonal communication such as initiating conversations

and developing and maintaining relationships, thus allowing the adolescent to make and preserve interpersonal relationships (Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 2). Group skills are necessary when two or more people get together and promote the understanding of interpersonal processes and interactions that affect the life of a group as a whole (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 116).

Interpersonal, social and group skills are necessary for:

- effective communication;
- establishing relationships;
- forming small and large groups, as well as community memberships; and
- participation in and management of interpersonal intimacy (Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 3).

➔ **Negotiation skills**

Negotiation skills teach the adolescent to acknowledge something of the other person's claim or point of view, and to debate and resolve the issue at hand in such a way that both parties reach a win-win situation (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 212; Covey, 1989: 207).

➔ **Problem-solving and decision-making skills**

Problem-solving and decision-making skills refer to techniques that involve rational decision-making skills, including a step-by-step method of dealing with problems, other than trial and error or acting on an intuitive basis (Gillis, 1994: 47). These skills should teach the adolescent to identify her problems, goals and a wide range of alternative strategies for effectively solving her problems (Vaughn *et al.*, 1997: 85). Furthermore, effective problem-solving skills will teach the adolescent to work together with others and to solve problems collaboratively (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 213). Problem-solving skills thus require creative solutions and attitudes (Rooth, 2000: 54).

Problem-solving and decision-making skills are the skills necessary for:

- information seeking;
- assessment and analysis;
- problem identification;

- solution implementation and evaluation;
- goal-setting;
- time-management;
- critical thinking; and
- conflict management (Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 3).

➔ **Skills to develop self-esteem, self-concept and identity**

Opportunities to discover positive qualities, talents and potential developing of a positive self-concept formation need to be created and afforded to the adolescent. Such opportunities expose the adolescent to the understanding of and dealing with life experiences and the meanings she assigns to these in order that these experiences may have a positive influence on the nature of her self-concept (Rooth, 2000: 70).

Skills to develop self-esteem, self-concept and identity are necessary for ongoing development of personal identity and emotional awareness, including self-monitoring, maintaining a positive self-view, manipulating and accommodating one's environment, clarifying values, sex-role development, making meaning, making moral choices and certain aspects of sexuality (Kadish *et al.*, 2001: 3).

➔ **Stress management**

Stress management involves various strategies that may be used by the adolescent in order to control her responses to stressful events (Woodbridge, 1998: 50). Effective stress management includes identification and analysis of problems related to stress and the application of various tools to alter either the source of stress or the experience of stress (Cotton in Woodbridge, 1998: 50).

➔ **Sexuality education and HIV/AIDS education**

Sexuality education and HIV/AIDS education are not merely about telling adolescents about 'the facts of life' nor about a set of warnings and information about sexually transmitted infections (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 211).

These are necessary, but need to be woven into open, free, and supportive discussions about interpersonal relationships, values and beliefs, and the worries that the adolescent may have (Donald *et al.*, 1997: 211).

HIV/AIDS is a serious health hazard and by far the biggest current crisis in South Africa (Strydom, 2003: 59). HIV/AIDS education aims at educating the adolescent about sexuality and HIV/AIDS in an objective and factual manner. This will promote the prevention of the disease by way of communicating correct knowledge and information, in order to change the adolescents' and communities' attitudes and sexual behaviour (Strydom, 2003: 59).

Sexuality education and HIV/AIDS education should empower the adolescent to assess risks and negotiate safer sexual behaviour. Furthermore, the adolescent should ultimately understand the confluence of gender, sexuality and sex, and her sexual and reproductive health and rights (Ncgobo, 2002: 96).

➡ **Study skills**

Study skills and methods are important aspects of learning and involve effective time management, organising studying, setting goals, self-monitoring, and self-advocacy, listening and taking notes, remembering information, studying and taking tests (Vaughn *et al.*, 1997: 488). These skills should be taught to the adolescent in order for her to be empowered to learn effectively.

➡ **Substance use and abuse**

An important aspect of substance use and abuse education is to teach resistance to social influence by addressing personal self-management skills and social skills needed to cope with the environment and to choose healthy alternatives to substance use (Hahn *et al.*, 2002: 1)

Life Orientation is a critical learning area as it addresses the challenges associated with the period of adolescence as outlined in the Learning

Outcomes and more specifically in the Assessment Standards by teaching the above skills (Department of Education, 2002: 40 – 49).

3.4.3 SPECIFIC LIFE ORIENTATION CHALLENGES THAT HAVE BEEN RESEARCHED IN SOUTH AFRICA TO DATE

In South Africa a number of research projects have been conducted around the value and importance of Life Orientation, as well as around various Life Orientation themes. The following table summarises this research:

Table 3.2 Research projects in South Africa relating to Life Orientation

Theme	Researcher and year	Conclusion
Personal and interpersonal effects of a life skills programme on Grade 7 learners	Bender and Lombard (2004)	▪ Life Orientation empowers learners to live meaningful lives in a society that demands rapid transformation. ▪ By acquiring the relevant life skills during the appropriate stage of development, the adolescent achieves optimal functioning. ▪ Future life skills programmes should focus on asking adolescents with what kind of developmental challenges they would like to help to enable them to cope with these challenges. ▪ Adolescents should be asked to identify specifically what coping skills they would like to practise. This would help them to take

		ownership of the programme.
Substance abuse	Malaka (2003)	The exposure to alcohol as a means of recreation is a common practice among young South Africans and the typical adolescent in this country finds herself in a social environment where there is: ▪ a fair degree of social support for alcohol; ▪ much exposure to alcohol use and abuse; ▪ limited discrimination against alcohol use; and ▪ a personal need for or attraction to alcohol intake.
Sexual behaviour	Malaka (2003)	▪ It is important to introduce gender studies, assertiveness and refusal skills in the Life Orientation learning programmes, as these life skills will empower both male and female adolescents with regard to sexual behaviour. ▪ The adolescent does not always associate her own sexual activities with the harm that could result from unsafe sex, as she may believe that the infections, diseases and unplanned pregnancies of irresponsible sexual behaviour

		will not happen to her. ▪ Adolescents possess very little knowledge about safer sex. ▪ Although the adolescent may demonstrate a carefree and fatalistic attitude, it is important for her to understand and believe that death is inevitable and that the realities of irresponsible and high-risk sexual behaviour are profound. ▪ Sexual education is thus an important aspect of the adolescent's education.
Sexual behaviour	Ncgobo (2002)	▪ Curriculum 2005 has installed life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education as part of the Life Orientation learning area and the Assessment Standards of Learning Outcome 1: Health promotion directly targets and addresses these specific aspects. ▪ The Department of Education aims at attaining the prevention of infections through an effective life skills programme whereby behavioural changes are facilitated through life-enhancing skills. These life skills are a major part of the Life

		Orientation learning area and are thus crucial to the curriculum. Through an effective learning programme focussing on sexual education the adolescent will be: ● empowered to assess risks and negotiate safer sexual behaviour; ● exposed to various sources of norms and values; ● able to clarify the influence these sources have on her sexual attitudes; ● able to understand the confluence of gender rights, sexuality and sex, sexual and reproductive health; and ● able to develop a general culture of human rights.
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However, it does not appear as if adolescents have been polled to determine their perception of Life Orientation themes in general. Marais (1998) conducted similar research in surveying the guidance needs of the different race groups in Grade 12. Research results suggested that a difference in guidance needs existed between the race groups. The following table summarises the top 5 guidance needs of each race group:

Table 3.3 Top 5 guidance needs of South African population groups in 1998

Black	White	Indian	Coloured
1. Core skills, e.g. decision-making skills, communication skills, information skills	1. Job-hunting skills	1. Crisis management skills,	1. Financing one's studies
2. Financing one's studies	2. Guidance regarding subject choice at school	segregation and loss in family, addictions, suicide	2. Guidance regarding subject choice at school
3. Time management	3. Self-awareness, e.g. interests, goals, promoting self-esteem	2. Relationships and dating	3. Job-hunting skills
4. Preparation for the work place	4. Tertiary institutions	3. Family and parenting	4. Preparation for the workplace
5. Self-employment	5. Financing one's studies	4. Relationships e.g. prejudice, team-building	5. Tertiary institutions
		5. Financing one's studies	

Marais (1998) concluded that the guidance needs of adolescents should be taken into account when a School Guidance Programme is drawn up in future. Marais also suggested that a needs assessment be done in all race groups and that the contents of future Guidance syllabuses be based on the needs of adolescents.

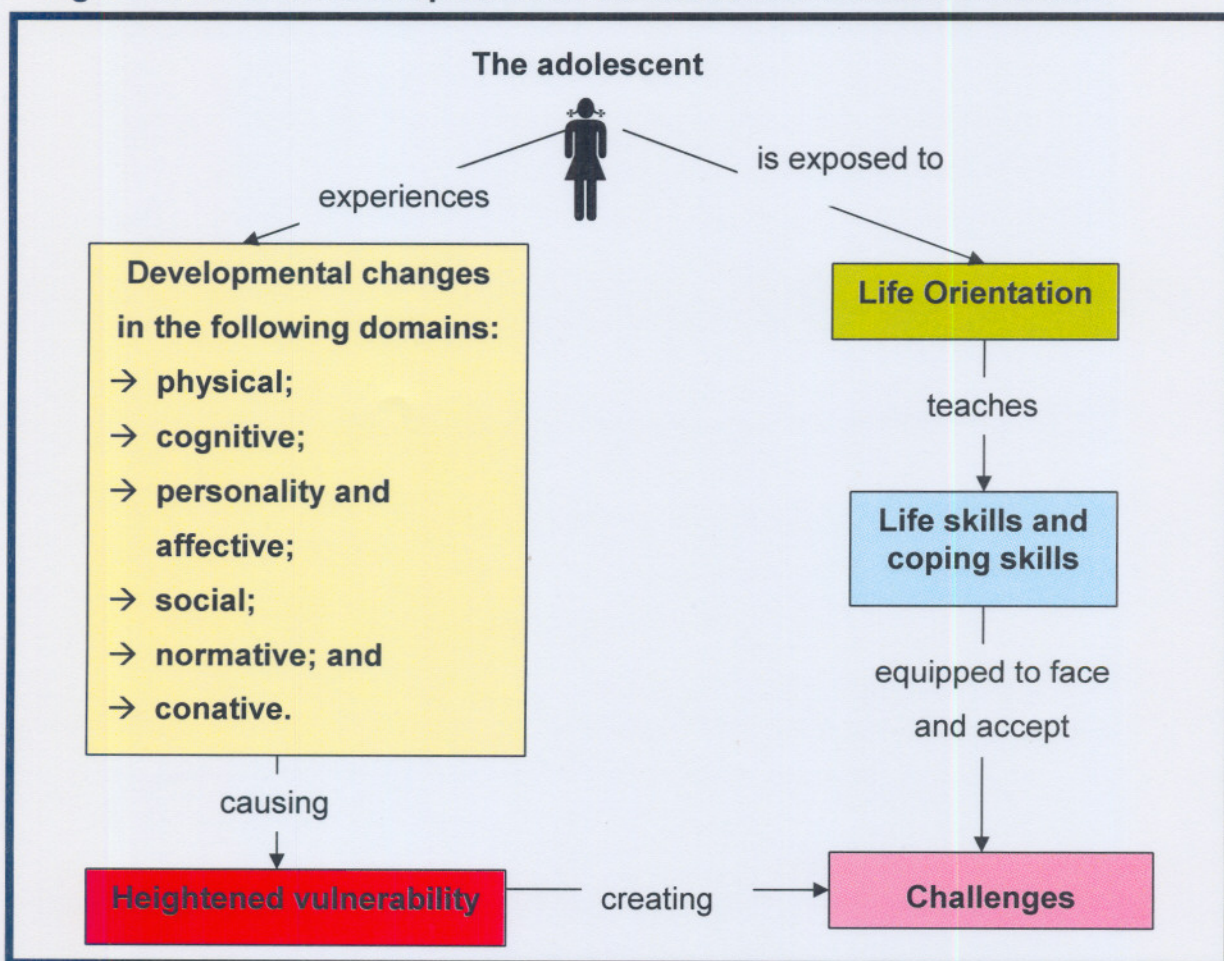
3.5 CONCLUSION

Life Orientation and especially Life Skills Education is critical because problems concerning living are widespread (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 103). Adolescents, in particular, require education and guidance in order to acquire

the necessary life skills to cope with the challenges of adolescent developmental tasks. Bender and Lombard (2004: 101) and Marais (1998: 148) suggest that future life skills programmes should focus firstly on asking the adolescent with what kind of developmental challenges she needs help, in order to enable her to cope more effectively. Secondly, the adolescent should be asked to state what coping skills she would like to practise. This is precisely what this study sets out to do.

The relationship between the adolescent and Life Orientation can be a powerful one, as an effective curriculum will educate and empower the adolescent to cope with the challenges she will face. This relationship is summarised in the figure below.

Figure 3.5 The relationship between the adolescent and Life Orientation

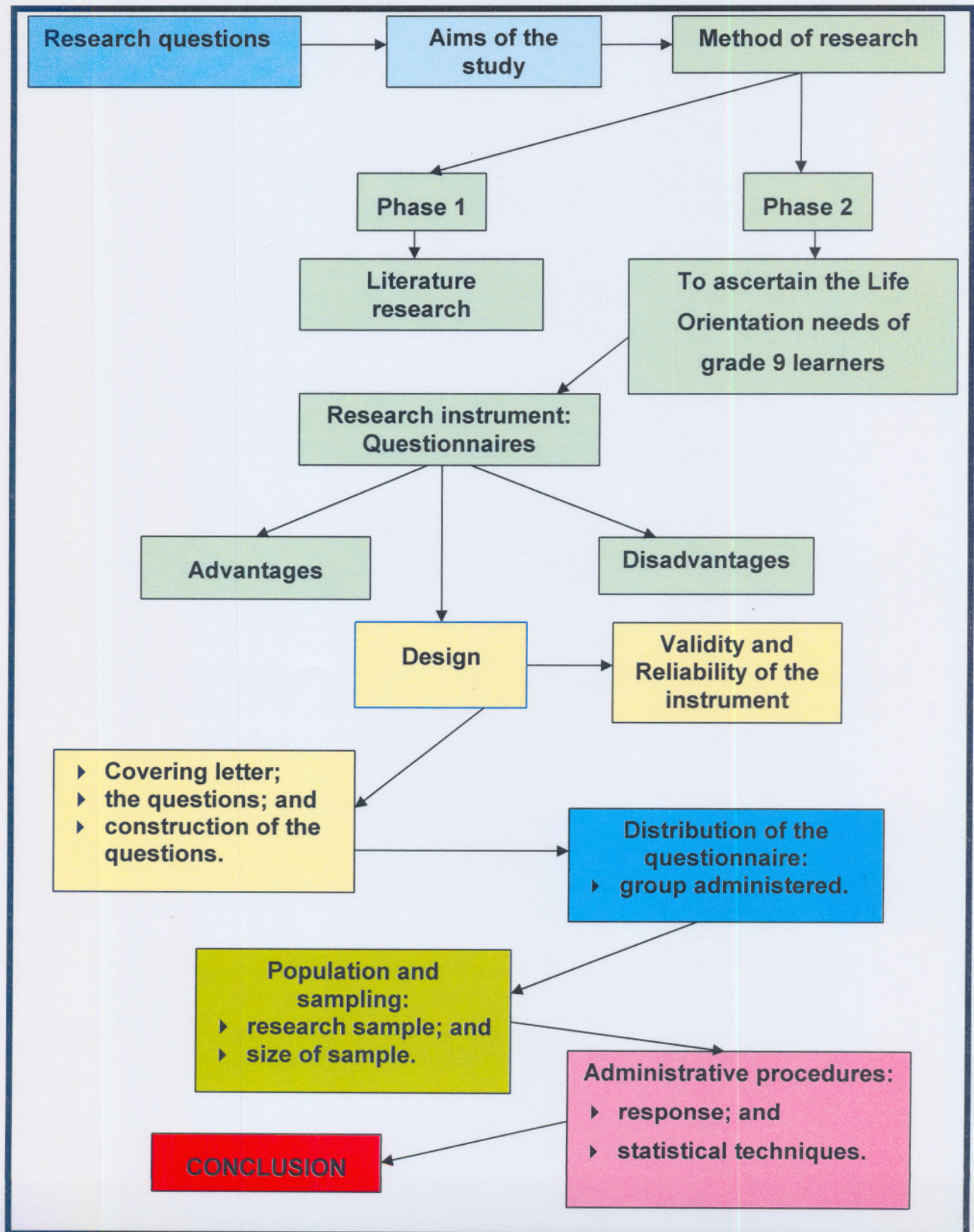


In the following chapter an overview of the research design will be given.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW



4.2 INTRODUCTION

Life Orientation as a learning area in the Senior Phase is arguably necessary and its importance in the holistic approach to education is indisputable. Furthermore, an important aim of this learning area is to empower the learner to use her talents to achieve her full physical, cognitive, social and personal potential. This specific learning area aims to equip learners with the required skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for successful living and learning.

The latter will be difficult to achieve if learners' perceptions regarding necessary skills and knowledge are not taken into account. This study aims to survey what Grade 9 learners identify as relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to achieve this goal of successful living and learning.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As a Life Orientation educator, the researcher is overwhelmed by the number of Life Orientation manuals, modules and books that are available on specific themes and skills that have been identified as important to the adolescent. This has led to the following research problem:

Does the current Life Orientation curriculum meet grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs?

The above problem leads to the following additional research questions:

- ❑ What is the nature of adolescence, with specific reference to adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability?
- ❑ What is the nature and scope of Life Orientation?
- ❑ What is the relevance of Life Orientation to the adolescent?
- ❑ What are the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners?
- ❑ Do Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners differ according to gender and race?
- ❑ Are Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs met by the current Life Orientation curriculum?

- What recommendations can be made with regard to the relevance of the Life Orientation curriculum to Grade 9 learners?

4.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objective of this study is to investigate whether the current Life Orientation curriculum meets Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs.

The overall objective can be operationalised by the following specific aims:

- to determine the nature of adolescence, with specific reference to adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability;
- to determine the nature and scope of Life Orientation;
- to determine the relevance of Life Orientation to the adolescent;
- to consult with Grade 9 learners to determine their specific Life Orientation needs;
- to determine whether Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners differ according to gender and race;
- to examine whether these needs are met in the current Life Orientation programme; and
- to make recommendations regarding the relevance of the Life Orientation curriculum to Grade 9 learners.

4.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH

An empirical investigation was conducted. The investigation was conducted in two phases:

- **phase 1:** a literature study was conducted; and
- **phase 2:** survey research was done.

The procedures central to each phase are discussed below.

4.5.1 Phase 1: Literature Research

Primary and secondary literature sources, as well as the Internet, were studied to gather information on:

- adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability (cf. Chapter 2); and

- the nature and scope of Life Orientation within the framework of Curriculum 2005 (cf. Chapter 3).

4.5.2 Phase 2: Survey Research

Descriptive quantitative research involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring possible correlations among two or more phenomena, and this form of research examines a situation as it is (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 191). For the purpose of this study, the method of survey research was employed.

Survey research is an effective instrument for descriptive quantitative research, as this approach looks closely at a phenomenon of the moment in order to gain a better understanding of the present (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 191; Tuckman, 1994: 11). A conclusion from one transitory collection of data provides the information to project the state of affairs over a longer period of time (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:196).

A survey is simple in design as it involves administering questions or interviews to willing respondents (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003: 223; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:196). The responses are summarised in percentages, frequency counts or more sophisticated statistical indexes. Responses of the sample population are then used to draw inferences about a particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:196).

Survey research typically employs a face-to-face interview or a written questionnaire (Gall, *et al.*, 2003: 223; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:196). For the purpose of this study, a closed written questionnaire, based on the literature study, was compiled to determine the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners. This questionnaire was then administered as a group-test to Grade 9 learners at two separate high schools.

In the following section, the closed questionnaire as research instrument will be discussed.

4.5.2.1 The research instrument

According to Gall *et al.* (1996: 223), the choice of a measuring instrument depends on the goal of the study. The main aim of this study is to identify the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners from the learners' perspective. The questionnaire as research instrument was used to identify the specific needs of Grade 9 learners and the results of the questionnaire will be used to assess whether the current curriculum meets these needs.

□ The questionnaire as research instrument

Questionnaires are the most generally used research instruments of all (Delport in de Vos, 2001: 172). A questionnaire is a form with a set of questions which a respondent is expected to complete (Delport in De Vos, 2001: 172). Furthermore, the objective of the questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from individuals who are informed on a particular issue.

a) Advantages of questionnaires

The questionnaire as a research instrument held the following advantages for this study:

- the questionnaire was relatively short, making it time- and cost- effective;
- the respondent's task was simple as the questionnaire was easy to read and to complete;
- the researcher employed clear, unambiguous language;
- the researcher defined each question in order to provide clarity to the respondent;
- the questionnaire was attractive and professional; clean lines and clear typing were used;
- respondents were geographically easy to reach;
- the respondents enjoyed a high degree of freedom in completing the questionnaire;

- anonymity was assured, as respondents did not have to mention their names or addresses, which may have promoted more candid answers; and
- the data gathered from this study's questionnaires provides information regarding the specific Life Orientation needs of the learners.

(Delport in De Vos, 2001: 172; Gall *et al.*, 1996: 289 - 290; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 202 - 204).

Although there are many advantages to the questionnaire, there are also disadvantages.

b) Disadvantages of questionnaires

The following disadvantages were noted in this study:

- the closed format of the questionnaire could have frustrated some respondents if they felt their views were not reflected in the questionnaire options; and
- questions may have been incorrectly interpreted.

(Gall *et al.*, 1996:289-290).

Despite the disadvantages of the questionnaire, it remains a valid research instrument and is widely used by researchers, especially in education and the social sciences (Tuckman, 1994: 11 - 12).

The design of the questionnaire is important, to ascertain that all necessary information is gathered.

4.5.2.2. The design of the questionnaire

A clear, unambiguous questionnaire relevant to the respondents' needs concerning the Life Orientation curriculum was designed. The following components received attention:

□ The covering letter

A covering letter accompanied the questionnaire. The covering letter explained the nature and purpose of the research project and enlisted the principal's co-operation (Gall *et al.*, 1996: 299 - 300; Delport in de Vos, 2001: 176).

The following aspects were taken into consideration in drawing up the covering letter:

- identification of the researcher undertaking the research;
- the purpose of the study; and
- an identification of the importance of the study as well as its target population.

A copy of the covering letter is included as Addendum A.

□ The questions

There are different types of questions that can be used in a questionnaire. For the purpose of this study, closed-ended/multiple choice questions were used. A closed-ended/multiple choice question requires the respondent to choose from among a list provided in the question (Mullens, 1994: 33; Fouché in De Vos, 2001: 160). The respondents were required to select one of four statements of worth: Very important, Important, Quite Important and Not Important, in order to rate the importance of a Life Orientation skill.

□ The construction of the questionnaire for this study

The questionnaire included:

- a covering letter;
- biographical information: gender and race; and
- 51 closed-ended/multiple choice questions.

A copy of the questionnaire is included as Addendum B. The content of the questions is informed by prevailing literature indications of life skills (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 43; Junge *et al.*, 2003: 166; Donald *et al.*, 2002: 156; Rooth, 2000: 1; Du Toit *et al.*, 1997: 6; Nelson-Jones, 1993: 10).

4.5.2.3 Pre-test

The pre-test/pilot study is essential before the questionnaire is ready for field work (Mullens, 1994: 33; Fouché in De Vos, 2001:158). The pre-test group consisted of 10 Grade 9 learners who meet the criteria of the test-group. The pre-test group was asked to complete the questionnaire and subsequently to offer comments and recommendations regarding the clarity of questions and the explanations given for each question, as well as to identify any statements that were ambiguous.

After the results of the pre-test were analysed and processed, amendments were made regarding the clarity of some statements. The final questionnaire was then compiled and distributed to the respondents.

4.5.2.4 Validity and reliability

The validity of a questionnaire is determined by the degree to which the content of the items represents the constructs that are being measured (Gall *et al.*, 2003: 223). The content of the items in the questionnaire for this study measures the importance of Life Orientation skills and themes for Grade 9 learners. The content of the items in this questionnaire do represent the constructs that are being measured.

Reliability refers to the extent to which similar results would be achieved if the same case were studied again using exactly the same procedures (Gall *et al.*, 2003: 460). The Cronbach alpha correlation formula was used to calculate reliability. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items measures a single unidimensional latent construct. It is thus a coefficient of reliability, if the inter-item correlations are high (>0.7), the reliability of the instrument is also high (UCLA Academic Technology Services, 2002). The Cronbach alpha value obtained for this questionnaire was 0.92, which indicates that the

reliability of the instrument is satisfactory. Furthermore, the average inter-item correlation value which is statistically determined to be ($>0.1 <0.5$) as a value within this range would indicate inter-item reliability. The value obtained for this questionnaire is 0.19, which indicates the inter-item correlation of the instrument is satisfactory.

4.5.2.5 Distribution of the questionnaires

Different means of distributing questionnaires exist, namely mailed, telephonic, personal, hand-delivered or group-administered questionnaires (Fouché in De Vos, 2001: 153 - 156). For the purpose of this study, the questionnaires were administered to the group. This was the best option for the researcher because of the following advantages of the group-administered questionnaire:

- ▶ the respondents in the group were exposed to the same stimulus;
- ▶ questions were not discussed with other respondents, ensuring individual responses;
- ▶ the researcher was present to give certain instructions and to elucidate possible uncertainties; and
- ▶ the process was time- and cost-effective.

(Delport in De Vos, 2001: 174).

There are also disadvantages to a group-administered questionnaire. These include:

- ▶ obtaining a suitable time and venue that suits all respondents;
- ▶ some respondents may experience difficulty in understanding certain questions and instructions, but are too embarrassed to ask for assistance in the group;
- ▶ questions may be answered arbitrarily; and
- ▶ some degree of mutual influence may occur.

(Delport in De Vos, 2001: 174).

The disadvantage of struggling to obtain a suitable time and venue was circumvented by liaising with schools ahead of time. However, various schools

in the researcher's area could not participate, as no time could be found for a group-administered questionnaire within the school's time schedule.

4.5.2.6 The population and sampling

The term sample implies the simultaneous existence of a population or universe of which the sample is a smaller section (Delport in de Vos, 2001:197). The population of this study comprises all Grade 9 learners in South Africa.

Given logistic and financial constraints, the population was limited to mainstream Grade 9 learners in the towns of Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging in the Vaal Triangle, Gauteng Province, covering the Sedibeng East and West Education Districts for the purpose of this study.

□ Research sample

Arkava and Lane (as quoted by Strydom *et al.*, 2001: 191) define a sample as the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. The sample in the study was limited to 445 mainstream Grade 9 learners in the Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging towns, which makes this sample a non-probability, purposive sample.

- non-probability sampling plans are those that provide no basis for estimating how closely the sample characteristics approximate the parameters of the population from which the sample was obtained (Mullens, 1994: 41). Some members of the population have little or no chance of being sampled (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 218); and
- in purposive sampling, people are chosen for a particular purpose, as these people are composed of the elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population (Delport in De Vos, 2001: 207). The two schools were purposively selected as their learner populations reflect the demographics of South Africa.

To be included, learners needed to be mainstream Grade 9 learners attending school in the towns of Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging. The sampling in this study was therefore done without randomisation (Strydom *et al.*, 2001: 193)

The following steps were adhered to in order to obtain this non-probability, purposive sample:

- i) The English-medium high schools in the towns of Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging were identified.
- ii) Principals were contacted and permission was requested to conduct the survey at their schools.
- iii) The Grade 9 learners within these schools were then identified.
- iv) The sample group was balanced between gender and race.

□ The size of the sample

The size of the sample group depends on the kind of data the researcher plans, on how accurate the sample has to be for the researcher's purposes, and on population characteristics (Neuman, 2000: 216). Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 221) suggest that when the population exceeds 5000, a sample size of 400 is adequate. There are in excess of 5000 Grade 9 learners in the Vaal Triangle. A sample of 445 (all Grade 9 learners from two public schools in the Vaal Triangle) was used in this study, as it approximates Leedy and Ormrod's recommendation.

4.5.2.7 Administrative procedures

Permission was requested from the principals for the questionnaire to be administered to the target population. Principals were telephonically invited to allow the Grade 9 learners to participate in this study. After the purpose of the questionnaire was explained to the principal and confidentiality was ensured, no resistance was encountered. All principals were very positive towards the study.

The researcher administered the questionnaire to the 445 learners. The Life Orientation teachers of the schools were present to ensure that the administration procedure was fair and without bias. All questionnaires were

received directly after the administration thereof. No problems were encountered as the principals, educators and learners realised the benefit of the study regarding the curriculum content of Life Orientation.

□ **Response**

445 Questionnaires were administered and returned. The response rate for this study was 100%. This excellent response rate can be ascribed to the accessibility of group-administered questionnaires.

□ **Statistical techniques**

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus, analysed and processed the data collected. The SAS programme was employed to process the data and to determine frequencies and percentages.

The use of *t*-tests to establish differences between the needs of learners on basis of gender and race were employed. The *t*-distribution (value) is used to determine the level of statistical significance of an observed difference between sample means. The value $p < 0.05$ is applied in order to determine the significance levels where the higher level of significance responds to a lower *p*-value (Gall *et al.*, 2003: 429). The Cohen D-value is in turn used to determine the practical effect of the data where statistical differences between gender and race groups are observed.

Table 4.1 Cohen's D-value indicating practical effect of statistical differences (The G*Power Analysis Window, 2001)

d- value	Size effect	Conclusion
<0.2	Small effect	Practical effect of the statistical differences are of very little significance.
>0.5 <0.8	Medium effect	Practical effect is noticeable, but not significant.
>0.8	Large effect	Practical effect is significant.

The statistical techniques mentioned above were employed to determine the Life Orientation needs of the respondents and these were subsequently ranked from most important to least important.

The results obtained from the questionnaire were used to draw conclusions and to make recommendations concerning the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners pertaining to the current Life Orientation curriculum. In addition to this, the results will determine to what extent the curriculum addresses the learners' needs as prescribed by the learners.

4.6 CONCLUSION

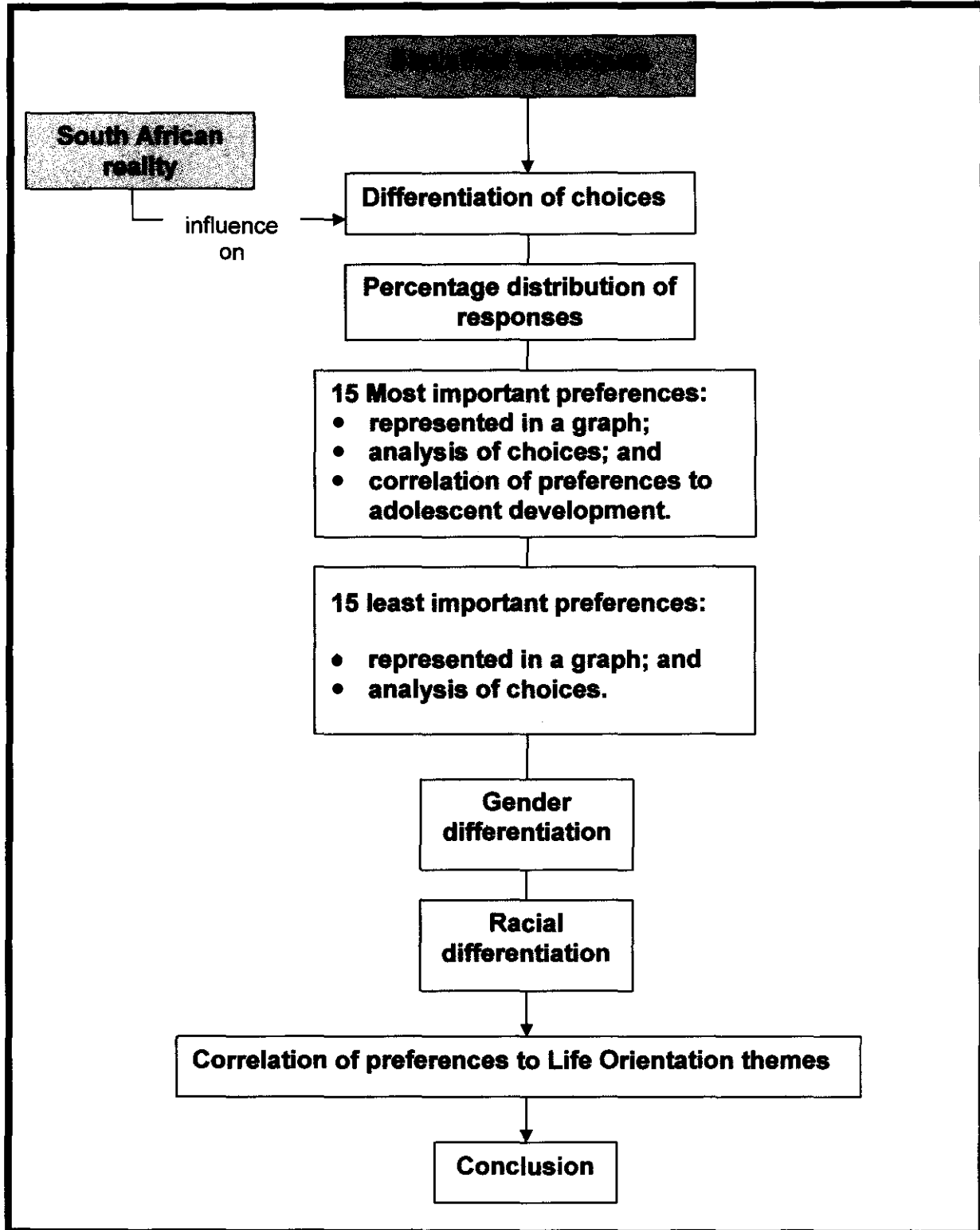
The research design was discussed in this chapter. References were made to the research methodology, the development of the measuring instrument, the population and the sampling of the population, the administrative procedures and the statistical techniques for interpreting the data.

In the next chapter, the research data of the questionnaire determining the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners will be analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW



The aim of the research questionnaire was to determine the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners. The ultimate aim of this study is to determine whether these needs are met by the current Life Orientation curriculum. The specific aims of this chapter are:

- ❑ to rank the Life Orientation preferences of the Grade 9 learners from most important to least important;
- ❑ to identify the 15 most important preferences, as well as the 15 least important preferences;
- ❑ to identify differences in preferences with regard to gender and race;
- ❑ to correlate the most important and least important preferences with the current Grade 9 Life Orientation themes; and
- ❑ to analyse the statistical data obtained from the research questionnaire in order to draw conclusions pertaining to whether the Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs are met by the current curriculum.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus, analysed and processed the data collected. The SAS programme was employed to process the data and to determine frequencies and percentages of responses. According to these results, the 15 most important and 15 least important choices will be determined. The use of *t*-tests (cf. Chapter 4.5.2.7.), to establish differences between the needs of learners on the basis of gender and race, were employed. Thereafter, the Cohen's D-test (cf. Chapter 4.5.2.7.) was administered in order to determine the practical effect of the differences found.

The results will be used to draw conclusions and to make recommendations concerning the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners pertaining to the current Life Orientation curriculum. In addition to this, the results will determine to what extent the curriculum addresses the learners' needs as prescribed by the learners.

5.3 DIFFERENTIATION OF CHOICES

The respondents were asked to rate the Life Orientation skills on the questionnaire as Very important, Important, Quite important and Not important. The data were analysed and the results of each question were converted into percentages in order to determine the distribution of responses for each question. The mean per question was then established. From these results the questions were ranked according to the mean in order to determine the 15 most important and the 15 least important choices. Each of these choices will be visually presented in terms of preference emphasis.

5.3.1 Percentage distribution of responses per question

Each response per question is represented in the table below. This table represents the Grade 9 learners' opinion of the importance of each Life Orientation skill presented in the questionnaire.

Table 5.1 Representation of the Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation preferences represented in percentages per question

	Very important	important	Quite important	Not important
1. Assertiveness (skills that teach you to stand up for your rights).	65	30	4	1
2. AIDS prevention (skills that teach you how to avoid being infected with HIV/AIDS).	79	14	6	1
3. Coping with HIV/AIDS (skills that teach you how to cope when you or someone close to you has AIDS).	60	30	9	1
4. Building social support systems (skills that teach you to establish reliable social support networks to help you cope with problems).	30	51	17	2
5. Career choices (skills that enable you to make wise career choice and help you search for employment).	80	16	3	1

6. Co-operation (skills that teach you to have meaningful partnerships with people).	31	51	17	1
7. Communication (skills that teach you to get your message across effectively).	35	44	19	2
8. Conflict resolution (skills that teach you to solve disagreements effectively).	26	46	24	4
9. Constructive coping strategies (skills that teach you to deal with difficult situations effectively).	41	42	14	3
10. Coping with change (skills that teach you how to handle change positively).	31	41	25	3
11. Coping with depression (skills that help you to identify the symptoms of depression and teach you how to deal with them).	38	42	18	2
12. Coping with diversity (skills that teach you to deal with people who are culturally and physically different from you).	34	42	21	3
13. Coping with divorce (skills that help you to deal with the effects of a divorce or parental separation).	36	35	19	10
14. Coping with failure (skills that teach you to deal with lack of success).	51	32	12	5
15. Coping with grief (skills that help you to manage the loss or death of a loved one).	59	27	11	3
16. Coping with loneliness (skills that teach you to become more sociable).	29	40	22	9
17. Coping with loss (skills that help you to deal with the loss of valuable people or possessions).	32	44	19	5
18. Coping with peer pressure (skills that help you to manage peer pressure in a positive manner).	40	39	18	3
19. Coping with rejection (skills that help you to deal with negative responses from people).	35	38	20	7

20. Coping with retirement (skills that teach you to plan ahead for the future).	61	24	11	4
21. Coping with trauma (skills that teach you to deal with violence, crime, disasters).	44	33	18	5
22. Countering exploitation (skills that teach you not to be taken advantage of).	45	37	14	4
23. Countering prejudice and sexism (skills that teach you not to judge people based on their race or gender).	54	29	14	3
24. Creativity (skills that teach you to think and act creatively).	40	39	18	3
25. Democracy (skills that teach you to be independent).	51	31	14	4
26. Decision-making (skills that teach you to make the best and most sensible decisions).	58	32	9	1
27. Drug and alcohol education (skills that will help you to identify the risks and hazards associated with the use of drugs and alcohol).	56	27	12	5
28. Entrepreneurship (skills that teach you to become self-employed).	55	32	10	3
29. Environmental education (skills that teach you to appreciate and care for the environment).	37	39	20	4
30. Financial planning skills (skills that teach you to work effectively with money and how to save it).	60	27	11	2
31. Goal-setting (skills that teach you to set realistic short- and long-term goals).	53	33	11	3
32. Group skills (skills that teach you to be an acceptable and effective team member).	28	45	23	4
33. Health education (skills that teach you to be physically and mentally healthy).	59	31	9	1

34. Human rights (skills that teach you about your basic human rights).	53	32	12	3
35. Legal rights (skills that teach you about your basic legal rights).	52	36	11	1
36. Parenting skills (skills that will empower you for the future as parents).	49	35	11	5
37. Positive relationship formation with peers (skills that teach you to have positive relationships with people of your own age).	45	36	4	5
38. Positive relationship formation with the opposite sex (skills that teach you to have positive male/female relationships).	54	28	12	6
39. Positive relationship formation with adults (skills that teach you to have positive relationships with adults).	50	35	11	4
40. Problem-solving (skills that teach you to solve problems effectively).	45	40	12	3
41. Religious Education (skills that teach you to understand and appreciate various religions)	39	38	18	5
42. Self-awareness (skills that help you to discover who you are).	61	28	8	3
43. Self-esteem (skills that teach you to value yourself).	61	31	6	2
44. Sexuality education (skills that teach you about the physical and emotional aspects and the health risks involved in sexual activity).	49	34	13	4
45. Socialisation (skills that teach you how to socialise appropriately with different people in different situations).	33	45	19	3
46. Stress management (skills that teach you to cope with and manage stress).	42	38	16	4
47. Study methods (skills that teach you to study effectively, producing good results).	70	22	6	2

48. Thinking skills (skills that teach you to think critically and plan sensibly before acting).	51	40	8	1
49. Time management (skills that teach you to plan your time effectively).	42	43	13	2
50. Value and interest clarification (skills that help you to identify your values and interests).	37	42	19	2
51. Violence and abuse education (skills that empower you to identify abuse and how to deal effectively with it).	53	30	13	4

From the statistical data, the learners' preferences have subsequently been ranked in order from most important to least important. Two methods of ranking were utilised in order to determine the order of the learners' preferences with regard to the 51 questions. Two methods were used to correlate the outcome of the results. In the first method, the mean of each question was statistically determined and the questions were ranked in accordance to these results. For the second method, each response was weighted with the following values: Very important 10, Important 7, Quite important 4, Not important 1. In turn, the sum of each response for each question was determined. Both methods produced the same results – the 15 most important and 15 least important preferences were exactly the same. In some cases the order of preferences had changed, but not so significantly to change the groupings of the top and bottom 15 preferences. For the purpose of this study, the responses will be ranked according to the mean, as this is a more objective method of ascertaining the order of Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners.

5.3.2 THE 15 MOST IMPORTANT PREFERENCES

The 15 most important preferences identified by the Grade 9 learners are as follows:

1. Career choice (skills that enable you to make a wise career choice and help you search for employment).

2. AIDS prevention (skills that teach you how to avoid being infected with HIV/AIDS).
3. Assertiveness (skills that teach you to stand up for your rights).
4. Study methods (skills that teach you to study effectively, producing good results).
5. Self-esteem (skills that teach you to value yourself).
6. Coping with HIV/AIDS (skills that teach you how to cope when you or someone close to you has AIDS).
7. Decision-making skills (skills that teach you to make the best and most sensible decisions).
8. Self-awareness (skills that help you to discover who you are).
9. Health education (skills that teach you to be physically and mentally healthy).
10. Financial planning skills (skills that teach you to work effectively with money and how to save it).
11. Coping with grief (skills that help you to manage the loss or death of a loved one).
12. Coping with retirement (skills that teach you to plan ahead for the future).
13. Thinking skills (skills that teach you to think critically and plan sensibly before acting).
14. Entrepreneurship (skills that teach you to become self-employed).
15. Legal rights (skills that teach you about your basic legal rights).

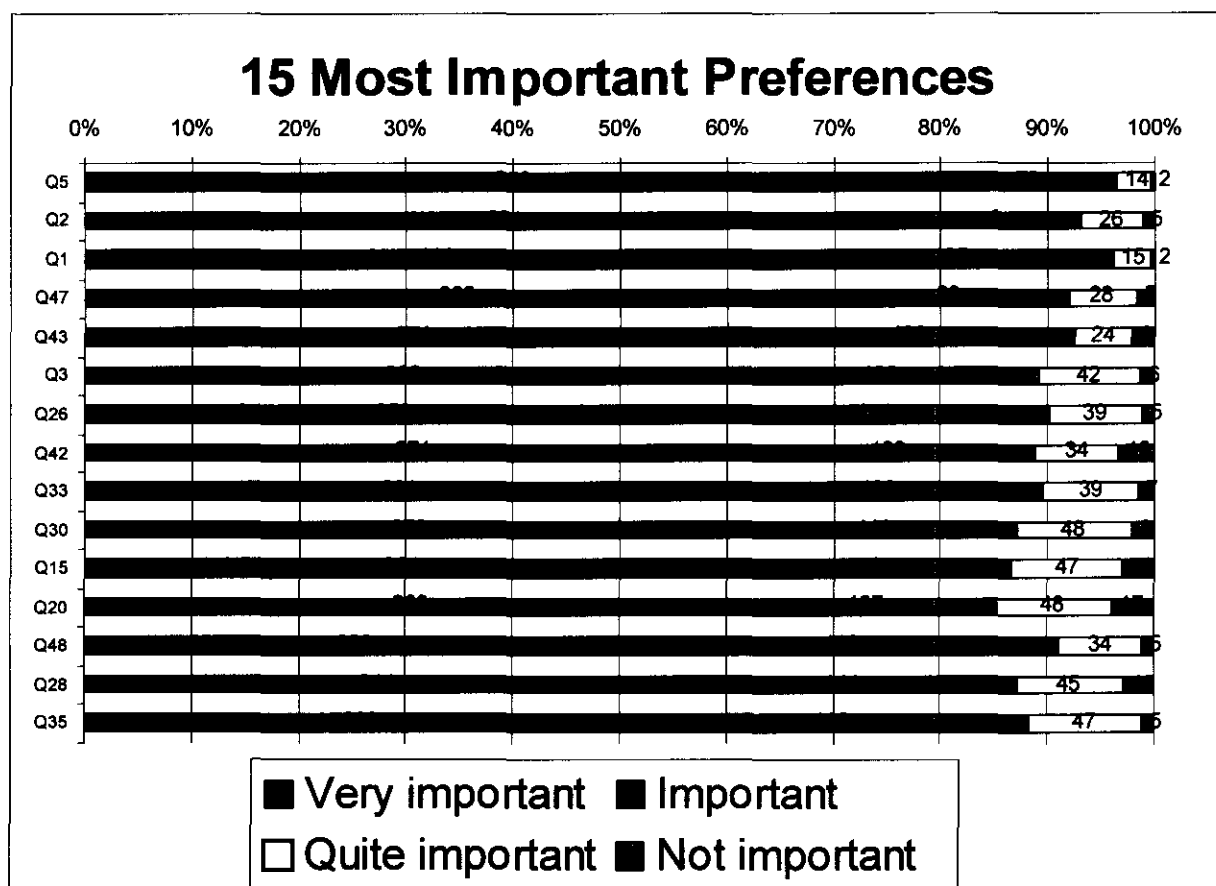
These Life Orientation skills can be divided into three broad categories, namely:

- 📅 future-orientated skills;
- 😊 self-empowerment skills; and
- 🧘 personal health skills.

5.3.2.1 REPRESENTED IN A GRAPH

The 15 most important preferences and the distribution of the Grade 9 learners' responses are summarised by the following stacked bar graph.

Graph 5.1 The 15 Most Important Preferences



5.3.2.2 ANALYSIS OF CHOICES

The 15 most important skills, as identified by Grade 9 learners, are characterised by practicality and functionality. These preferences are also future-orientated. The Grade 9 learners have identified skills that are very important and essential for coping with the challenges of modern day life in South Africa. The learners' Life Orientation needs are largely a reflection of the current South African reality.

The South African reality, more especially IN the Vaal Triangle, is one characterised by poverty, violence and unemployment (Mokoena, 2001: 85). Furthermore, it is a society that is HIV/AIDS-ridden.

South Africa experiences a high incidence of violent crimes such as rape, murder, car hijackings and robbery with extenuating circumstances (Mokoena, 2001: 85). The result of these violent acts is far-reaching, as the death of breadwinners, loss of labour hours and other costs associated with these crimes perpetuate poverty in South Africa and especially in the Vaal Triangle (Mokoena, 2001, 85). In addition to the economic effects of living in such a violent society, the people of South Africa, and the adolescents especially, endure psychological and social repercussions, which in turn have an effect on their development. This will account for a number of Life Orientation needs referring to self-empowerment, which this research sample indicated as very important.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa is a reality that adolescents encounter and it is clear that the biggest risk group in South Africa is the under 20s (Smetherham, 2004: 1). According to Ichharam and Martin (2002: 364), most people currently infected face severe social and economic problems, with further adverse consequences at the level of the household.

South Africa is described as the "Rainbow Nation" (Bentley, 2004: 4; February, 2004: 16) characterised by diversity. The South African society is a unique one filled with social, political and economic disparities (February,

2004: 16). Misperceptions and misunderstandings concerning the diversity experienced in this country create unique challenges for its people.

The South African adolescent's Life Orientation needs largely reflect the society's needs and these are determined by the social, economic and political reality of this country.

The social and economic realities, for which the South African adolescent needs to be equipped in order to lead a meaningful life and to make a meaningful contribution to society as a whole, are reflected in these 15 most important preferences. Each will be briefly discussed:

1 Career choice and entrepreneurial skills

Career choice has been identified as the most important need among Grade 9 learners according to this study. The South African employment market is characterised by a high rate of unemployment, due to reasons such as:

- the population explosion;
- the history of isolation;
- marginalisation; and
- economic policies (Malan, 1999: 45).

Furthermore, the current trends in the changing work place also have an influence on the job market. Developments in the fields of science, technology and electronics have led to the obsolescence of a number of known occupations. People entering the job market need to acquire specialised skills associated with new kinds of careers. Contract labour is on the increase, creating less job security, simultaneously increasing the prospects of entrepreneurs who can create smaller businesses that provide the skilled labour for contract purposes (Malan, 1999: 48 – 49).

The increase in the number of matriculants, as well as graduates from tertiary institutions, further add to the competitive nature of the employment market, causing intensive competition for situations and possible unemployment

(Malan, 1999: 45 – 49; De Bruin in Stead & Watson, 1999:92). An additional characteristic of the South African employment market is the implementation of the Equity Bill. Population groups who were previously marginalised are now afforded greater employment opportunities, which creates a more competitive job market.

Clearly, the respondents polled in this survey experience the altered reality of the world of careers and feel that their school curriculum should equip them to rise to this challenge. The Grade 9 learner requires skills that will enable her to make a wise career choice. These skills include those that will empower her to search for employment.

The unemployment rate may be alleviated by an increase in the number of businesses that are created by entrepreneurs (Malan, 1999: 48; Akhurst & Mkhize in Stead & Watson, 1999:166). However, skills associated with effective entrepreneurship need to be addressed and nurtured, and the Grade 9 learners have identified entrepreneurship skills as a very important Life Orientation need. It is evident that Grade 9 learners wish to be empowered through the teaching and acquisition of these skills.

The importance of the above-mentioned Life Orientation skills surpasses needs of the individual. These skills ultimately affect the greater South African society. The career choices of today's adolescents will have a crucial impact on the future economy and unemployment rate of South Africa.

2 Study methods

Study methods are associated with academic success. Learners are under pressure to achieve academic success, as this is associated with better career opportunities, studying at more respected tertiary institutions and attaining bursaries and scholarships. Mastering studying skills at a young age empowers the learner to achieve academic success, which will motivate her intrinsically to continue to achieve success (cf. chapter 2.3.6.3.). Grade 9 learners are also expected to write the Common Tasks for Assessment (cf.

Chapter 3.3.1.4.3.) which may place added stress and pressure on the learners in order to achieve academically. It is thus understandable that acquiring study methods is a very important Life Orientation need for Grade 9 learners in this sample.

¶ Financial planning skills and coping with retirement

Financial planning skills focus on teaching learners to work effectively with money and also how to save money. It appears that the adolescent is concerned with financial planning, as her future is directly affected by the availability of funds. Schooling, commodities and luxuries are important to the adolescent and the ability to work with money in order to achieve them is a very important need to be addressed in the Life Orientation curriculum for Grade 9 learners.

A future-orientated need that has been ranked as very important among Grade 9 learners in this sample is coping with retirement. This need may seem unnecessary for adolescents. However, it is closely related to financial planning, career choice and health education. It is apparent that today's Grade 9 learners are concerned about their future and require the skills to cope with planning for the future.

The learners in this sample show an awareness of the financial situation which many South Africans experience. Furthermore, the importance of acquiring effective financial skills can be related to the demographics of the learners in this sample, as the Vaal Triangle is considered to be a poor area with a large number of its population being unemployed and living in poverty (Mokoena, 2001: 68). The learners in this sample may thus display an awareness of the financial deficits associated with living in the Vaal Triangle.

¶ Thinking skills

The Grade 9 learners in this sample have a need to acquire skills that teach them to think critically and to plan sensibly before acting. Thinking skills are important skills to acquire as these skills are closely linked to other Life

Orientation skills such as decision-making and assertiveness. The effect of thinking skills will impact on the various domains of the adolescent life: the physical, cognitive, social, emotional and normative (cf. chapter 2.3.2.4). It is thus crucial that the adolescent acquires and practises successful thinking skills, which will improve her quality of life.

⌘ Health education

Health education is ranked by this sample of Grade 9 learners, as one of the most important skills. This refers to the skills that teach the adolescent to be physically and mentally healthy. This is linked closely to AIDS prevention skills, as well as to other aspects of a healthy lifestyle. The physical changes associated with adolescent development create many challenges for the individual, which place her in a position of heightened vulnerability (cf. Chapter 2.3.1.4.). The Grade 9 learners in this sample are very concerned with acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to lead a healthy lifestyle pertaining to nutrition, medical issues and mental and physical wellness.

⌘ AIDS prevention

AIDS prevention refers to skills that teach the adolescent how to avoid being infected with the virus. The Grade 9 learners in this sample rated this question as the second most important preference. It is apparent that adolescents are aware of the importance of AIDS prevention and require the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to prevent further infections. Furthermore, the skills that are associated with effective AIDS prevention are not solely limited to safer sexual practices. This Life Orientation skill addresses skills such as decision-making, assertiveness, goal-setting and health education, which will empower the adolescent to make critical decisions which will enrich rather than endanger her life (Ncgobo, 2002: 96).

☺ Coping with HIV/AIDS

Coping with HIV/AIDS would include skills that teach the learner how to cope when she or someone close to her has HIV/AIDS. Adolescents form part of

the group of society (age 15 to 25 years old) who are at a higher risk of exposure to the virus and thus to possible infection (Ichharam & Martin, 2002: 364; Smetherham, 2004: 1). It is thus likely for an adolescent to be in contact with peers or family members who are infected with the virus. The possibility that the adolescent can become infected is also a reality (Amon, 2002: 145 – 146; Strydom, 2003: 59 - 60).

Adolescents whose parents are infected with HIV, and who may or may not be infected themselves, face both emotional and physical risks (Amon, 2002: 146). A further reality of HIV/AIDS in South Africa is that it has a debilitating effect on the family system – the roles of family members change as their responsibilities are altered, and the family's financial situation may be negatively effected. As a result, in the absence of adult caretakers, adolescents take on additional responsibilities for the survival of the family and home (Amon, 2002: 146). The challenges of living with HIV/AIDS or of experiencing life with someone who is infected, are not merely limited to emotional or economic concerns.

The task of caring for and coping with loved ones who are HIV positive is extensive. In this task, the adolescent may be confronted with the following challenges:

- ⌘ dealing with the clinical care and treatment of the infected person;
- ⌘ understanding the legal rights of the infected person;
- ⌘ dealing with stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS;
- ⌘ addressing the emotional needs of the infected person; and
- ⌘ dealing with the physical and emotional risks associated with caring for an infected person (Amon, 2002: 144 – 146).

It is thus important to teach Grade 9 learners the necessary skills in order to meet the hardships associated with this challenge. The adolescent needs to be equipped with skills that will help her to cope physically, emotionally and mentally with the challenges associated with the task of coping with HIV/AIDS.

☺ **Assertiveness and decision-making skills**

Assertiveness and decision-making skills are often interrelated (cf. chapter 2.3.6.5.). Assertiveness relates to the ability to stand up for one's rights. Decision-making refers to the ability to make the best and most sensible decisions. Both skills refer to the ability to put into practice that which the individual feels compelled to say or do. A sensible decision-maker needs to be able to practise assertiveness and the converse is true: an assertive person requires the skills to make sensible decisions.

☺ **Self-esteem and self-awareness**

Grade 9 learners in this sample rank the following two skills as very important skills to acquire: self-esteem and self-awareness. The value of discovering one's strengths and deficiencies may encourage the learner to develop her true potential and to value herself. The learner who develops a positive self-esteem is more likely to be assertive and confident of achieving success in her personal, academic and social life (cf. chapter 2.3.3.5.1. – 2.3.3.5.4.).

☺ **Coping with grief**

Coping with grief is obviously a great need among Grade 9 learners in this sample, as it is ranked among the 15 most important Life Orientation needs. The South African adolescent may experience the death of someone close to her as a result of various factors. Firstly, the South African society is rife with violent crime. Murder is often associated with hijackings, house-breaking and gang-related activities (Mokoena, 2001: 85). Secondly, the reality of the high rate of AIDS-related deaths would have an impact on the adolescent. Further causes of death include road accidents, suicide and natural deaths. It is thus a likely possibility that many adolescents will need to deal with the death of someone close to them (Morin & Welsh, 1996: 1).

☺ **Legal rights**

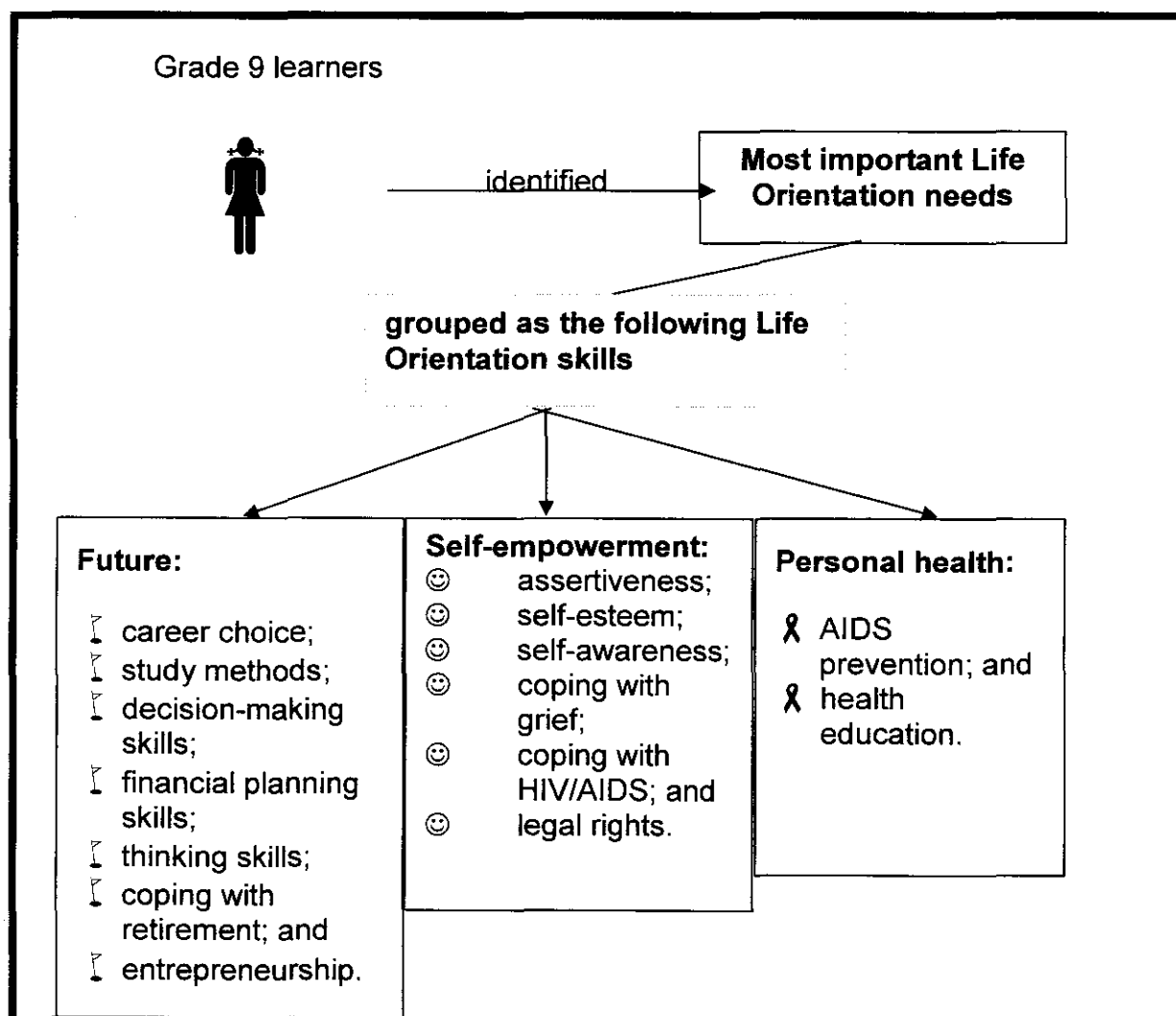
The Grade 9 learners ranked knowledge of legal rights as very important. Knowledge of basic legal rights will empower the Grade 9 learner to counter exploitation and will equip her with the knowledge of how to deal with issues pertaining to the law. An awareness of rights in general has increased since

1994, through workshops and programmes presented by government departments, schools and Non-Government Organisations. An increase of awareness among children concerning sexual abuse, bullying and personal safety has been noted (Anon, 2002: 13). However, further education is still necessary (Yutar, 2002: 6).

It is evident from these 15 most important Life Orientation needs that Grade 9 learners in this sample are very aware of the necessity of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that are practical and functional, as well as future-orientated to empower them to lead meaningful lives.

A summary of the most 15 most important needs is graphically depicted below:

Figure 5.1 A summary of the most important Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners



5.3.2.3 Correlation between Life Orientation preferences and adolescent development

The researcher investigated the relationship between the Life Orientation preferences of the Grade 9 learners in this sample and adolescent development. This was done in order to determine the motivation behind the choice of these preferences. Various factors could play a role in the choice of these Life Orientation preferences. Firstly, the challenges presented by developmental changes associated with adolescence could motivate these learners to identify specific Life Orientation skills that they feel are necessary in order to cope with this period of heightened vulnerability. Secondly, the current South African social, economic and political situation could also present a number of challenges for which the adolescent needs to be equipped in order to cope effectively.

A correlation between the Life Orientation preferences and the vulnerabilities and challenges associated with the adolescent domains of development has been drawn.

Table 5.2 Life Orientation preferences/skills associated with the adolescent domains of development

15 Most Important Life Orientation preferences/skills	Adolescent domains of development	Adolescent vulnerabilities and challenges
Self-empowerment ☺ self-esteem ☺ self-awareness ☺ assertiveness ☺ legal rights	affective and personality development normative development	- Developing a positive self-concept, and identity; and - emotional / identity development.
Personal Health ⚡ AIDS prevention and ⚡ health education	physical development	- Sexual attitudes and behaviour; - contracting sexually

		transmitted infections; • adequate nutrition and dieting; and • substance abuse.
Future ☞ career choice ☞ decision making skills ☞ thinking skills ☞ study methods	 } cognitive development conative development } conative development cognitive development	• Choosing a career; • Responsible decision making; and • critical and independent thinking.

Preferences that do not correlate with the domains of development are:

- ☺ coping with HIV/AIDS;
- ☺ coping with grief;
- ☞ entrepreneurship;
- ☞ coping with retirement; and
- ☞ financial planning.

From the above table it is evident that the Life Orientation preferences of the Grade 9 learners in this sample do correlate with most domains of adolescent development, namely cognitive, conative, physical, normative, and affective and personality development. These preferences appear to acknowledge the great number of challenges that characterise adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability. The preferences which do not correlate, do not appear to be typical of adolescence.

However, the identified preferences could suggest that the Grade 9 learners in this sample have a need to be equipped with skills that will empower them to cope with the challenges presented by the social, economic and political situation in South Africa. The preferences reflect skills that are needed in order to contend with financial restraints, finding career opportunities, coping with death (due to a number of causes) and understanding legal rights.

5.3.3 THE 15 LEAST IMPORTANT PREFERENCES

The 15 least important preferences identified by the Grade 9 learners are as follows:

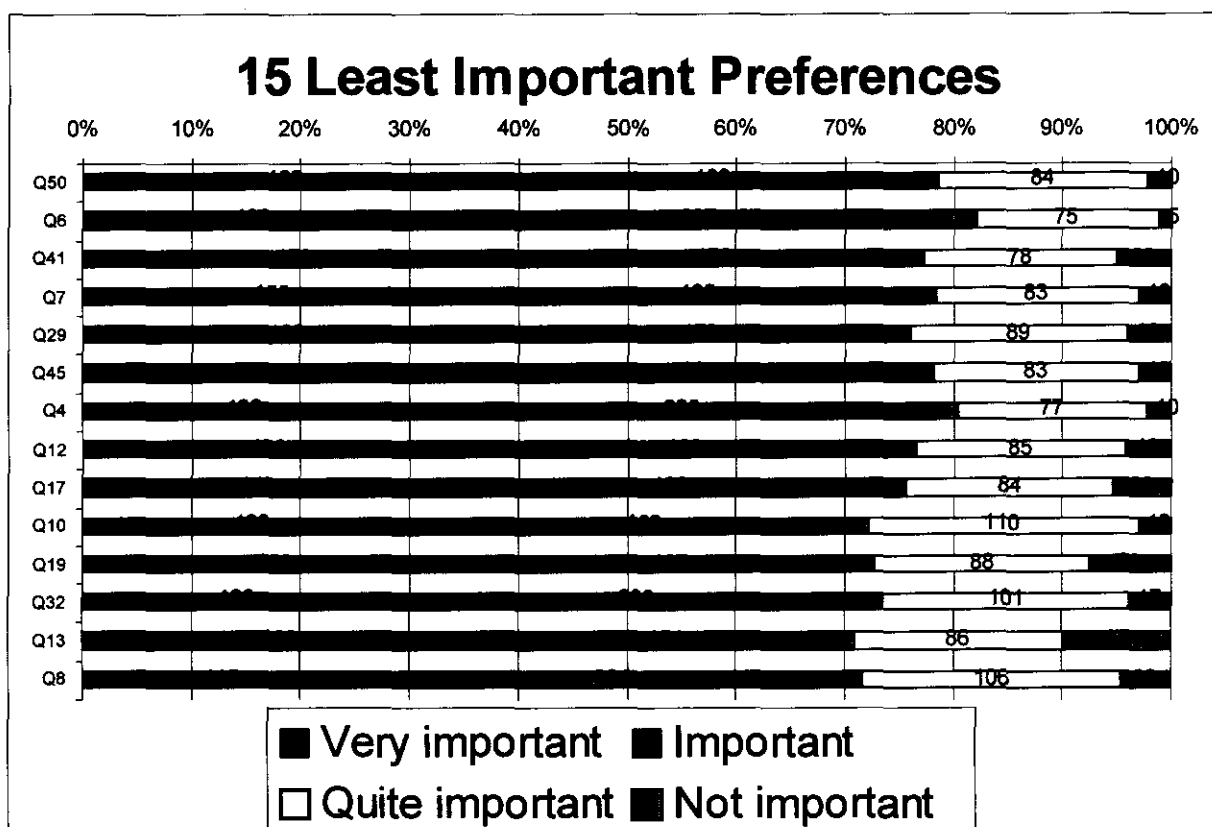
37. Value and interest clarification (skills that help you to identify your values and interests).
38. Co-operation (skills that teach you to have meaningful partnerships with people).
39. Religious Education (skills that teach you to understand and appreciate various religions).
40. Communication (skills that teach you to get your message across effectively).
41. Environmental education (skills that teach you to appreciate and care for the environment).
42. Socialisation (skills that teach you how to socialise appropriately with different people in different situations).
43. Building social support systems (skills that teach you to establish reliable social support networks to help you cope with problems).
44. Coping with diversity (skills that teach you to deal with people who are culturally, and physically different from yourself).

45. Coping with loss (skills that help you to deal with the loss of valuable people or possessions).
46. Coping with change (skills that teach you how to handle change positively).
47. Coping with rejection (skills that help you to deal with negative responses from people).
48. Group skills (skills that teach you to be an acceptable and effective team member).
49. Coping with divorce (skills that help you to deal with the effects of a divorce or parental separation).
50. Conflict resolution (skills that teach you to solve disagreements effectively).
51. Coping with loneliness (skills that teach you to become more sociable).

5.3.3.1 REPRESENTED IN A GRAPH

The 15 least important preferences and the distribution of the Grade 9 learners' responses are summarised by the following stacked bar graph.

Graph 5.2. 15 Least Important Preferences



5.3.3.2 ANALYSIS OF CHOICES

The least important Life Orientation needs, as identified by the Grade 9 learners, are abstract and immaterial. These are also skills that will develop and be refined as the learner grows older, matures and gains more life experience.

⊗ **Co-operation, communication, group and value and interest clarification skills**

At this point in the adolescent's life, the acquisition of co-operation skills, communication skills, group skills and value and interest clarification skills seem to develop systematically and age-appropriately. The adolescent is exposed to both positive and negative peer pressure which may teach her to evaluate her own position and behaviour within the group (cf. Chapter 2.3.4.2.2.). The adolescent will, through trial and error, acquire skills that will teach her to communicate effectively, to be an acceptable and effective team member and to develop meaningful partnerships with people.

☹ **Socialisation skills, building social support systems, coping with rejection and loneliness**

Another role of the peer group is to teach the adolescent how to socialise appropriately with people in different situations. The peer group will also teach the adolescent to become more sociable and to conduct herself in a socially acceptable manner (cf. chapter 2.3.4.2.2.).

☹ **Coping with divorce, loss and change**

The peer group is often a source of support for adolescents who are experiencing loss, change or difficult situations such as parental divorce/separation. Although the peer group may be a source of rejection for the adolescent it may also be a source of support for the adolescent who is experiencing rejection. It is thus possible that Grade 9 learners believe that these are not skills that they need to acquire through formal teaching but rather that these needs are being met and the skills are being learnt in more informal situations.

☹ **Coping with diversity and conflict resolution**

Many Grade 9 learners have been exposed to diversity from an early age, especially in places of education. The past decade of democracy in South Africa has afforded learners the privilege of integrating with fellow learners who are culturally, physically and religiously diverse. This Life Orientation skill was ranked as one of the least important skills by this sample and it is possibly due to the fact that the classrooms and the curriculum promote integration, mutual respect and acceptance from as early as the Foundation Phase. This goal in education is being achieved, as it is addressed in earlier grades.

☹ **Religious education and environmental education**

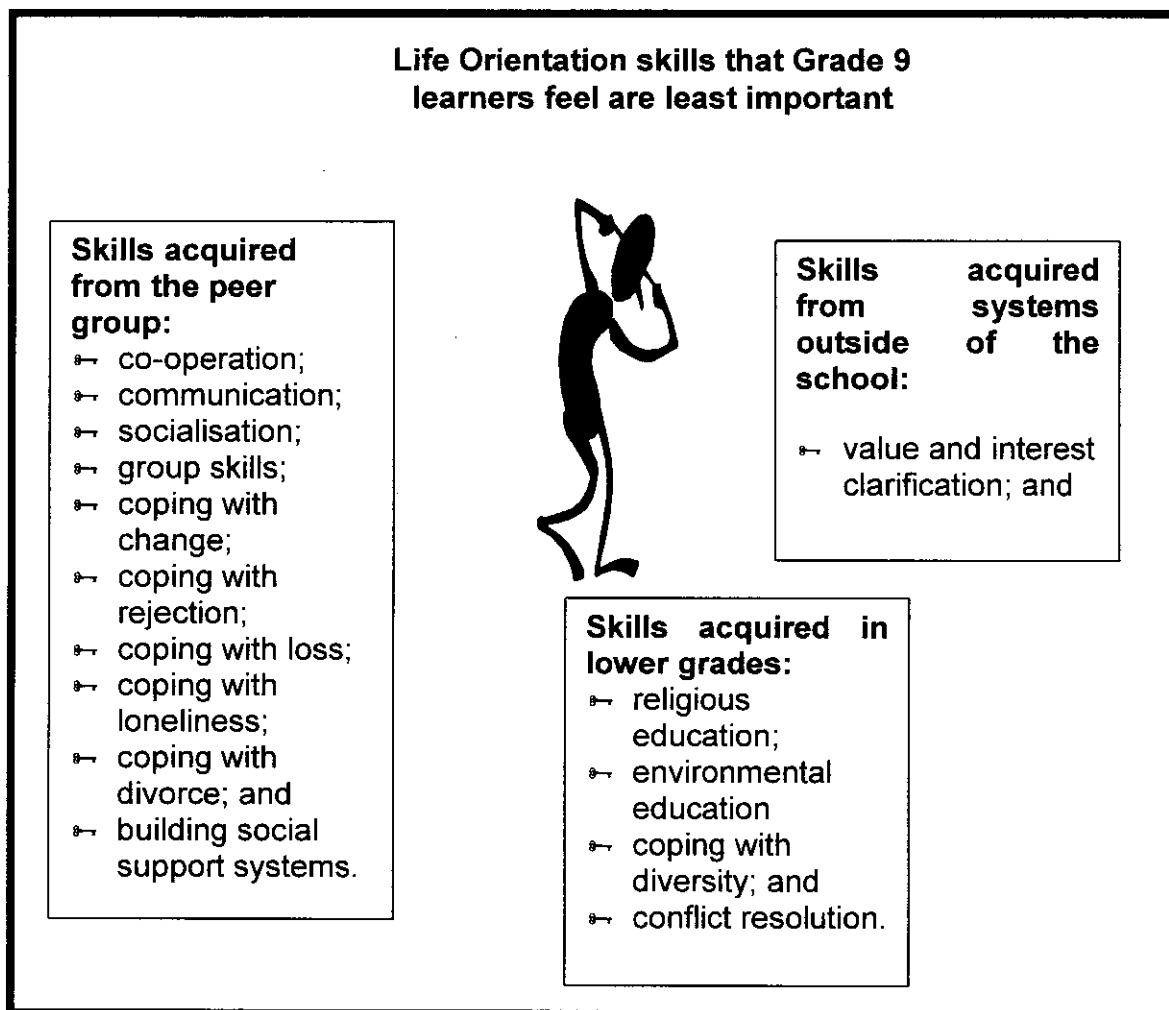
Religious education is ranked among the 15 least important Life Orientation preferences. It is possible that learners who have an interest in religion are already practising the necessary skills associated with their religion. Furthermore, these learners may already be receiving religious education from the leaders in their respective religious communities.

Similarly, these reasons may also be applicable in the low ranking of environmental education.

The above skills are necessary for adequate development, but this sample does not prioritise these skills. This may be because the skills have received sufficient attention in lower grades. In addition to this, these skills may not necessarily empower the learners to address and cope with the current South African reality.

A summary of the 15 least important skills follows:

Figure 5.2 A summary of the least important Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners



5.4 GENDER DIFFERENTIATION

The *t*-test was administered to ascertain significant differences in responses between the genders. This statistical method is useful in determining the significant differences between the Life Orientation preferences of male and female Grade 9 learners. Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were found on a few questions. However, according to Cohen's D-test, these differences are of small (0.2.) or medium ($>0.5 < 0.8$) practical effect. The following table represents the statistically significant differences between the responses of the male and the female respondents.

Table 5.3 Statistically significant differences between gender groups

Question	t-value	p	Cohen D	Effect size
Q3 Assertiveness	3.07	0.00	0.26	Small
Q4 Building social support systems	2.13	0.03	0.2	Small
Q10 Coping with change	2.14	0.03	0.2	Small
Q11 Coping with depression	2.79	0.01	0.26	Small
Q13 Coping with divorce	2.13	0.03	0.19	Small
Q14 Coping with failure	2.63	0.01	0.23	Small
Q19 Coping with rejection	2.76	0.01	0.25	Small
Q25 Democracy	2.00	0.05	0.18	Small
Q26 Decision-making	2.94	0.00	0.25	Small
Q36 Parenting skills	-3.30	0.00	0.28	Small
Q38 Positive relationship formation	-2.02	0.04	0.18	Small
Q42 Self-awareness skills	2.40	0.02	0.21	Small
Q43 Self-esteem skills	2.69	0.01	0.24	Small
Q44 Sexuality education	2.09	0.04	0.18	Small

The difference is so insignificant that it would appear that the Life Orientation curriculum need not differentiate between the two genders.

5.5 RACIAL DIFFERENCES

The *t*-test was administered between the different racial population groups in order to determine significant differences between the Life Orientation preferences of racial groups among Grade 9 learners. The differentiation of respondents according to race is as follows:

- ❑ 299 Black respondents;

- ❑ 121 White respondents;
- ❑ 20 Coloured respondents; and
- ❑ 4 Indian respondents.

Three *t*-tests were administered:

- ❑ the first test evaluated differences between the Black and White respondents;
- ❑ the second test grouped the Indian and Coloured respondents together as one group and evaluated the differences between this group of respondents and the White respondents; and
- ❑ the last test evaluated the differences between the responses of the combined Coloured and Indian group of respondents and the Black respondents.

Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were found in all three tests. However, according to Cohen's D test the differences are less than 0.5 and are thus of small or medium practical effect. The statistically significant differences for all three tests are represented in the following three tables:

Table 5.4 Statistically significant differences between race groups: Test 1 between Black and White respondents

Question	t-value	p-value	Cohen D	Effect size
Q3 Coping with HIV/AIDS	-3.09	0.00	0.30	Small
Q25 Democracy	-4.33	0.00	0.45	Small
Q36 Parenting skills	2.97	0.00	0.30	Small
Q38 Positive relationship formation with the opposite sex	2.49	0.01	0.27	Small
Q39 Positive relationship formation with adults	2.65	0.01	0.27	Small
Q40 Problem-solving	2.24	0.03	0.24	Small
Q43 Self-esteem	-2.80	0.01	0.28	Small
Q49 Time management	1.97	0.05	0.21	Small

Table 5.5 Statistically significant differences between race groups: Test 2 between White and Coloured/Indian respondents

Question	t-value	p-value	Cohen D	Effect size
Q14 Coping with failure	2.11	0.04	0.45	Small

Q15 Coping with grief	2.48	0.01	0.53	Medium
Q39 Positive relationship formation with adults	-2.89	0.00	0.45	Small

Table 5.6 Statistically significant differences between gender groups:

Test 3 between Black and Coloured/Indian respondents

Question	t-value	p-value	Cohen	Effect
			D	size
Q15 Coping with grief	2.22	0.03	0.46	Small
Q26 Decision-making skills	-2.08	0.04	0.39	Small

The differences found in all three tests are so insignificant that it would appear that the Life Orientation curriculum need not differentiate between the racial groups.

5.6 CORRELATION OF PREFERENCES TO LIFE ORIENTATION THEMES

In order to establish the extent to which the Life Orientation themes in the current curriculum correlate with needs identified in this study, each Life Orientation theme has been sub-divided into the Assessment Standards as specified by the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9 (Schools) Policy 2002. Thereafter, the Life Orientation skills that are taught in order to master or achieve the Assessment Standards were identified. These skills were then correlated with the 15 most important and the 15 least important preferences.

To determine which preferences are addressed in the current curriculum the researcher has tabled the findings accordingly. The skills bulleted by “☺” correlate with the most important preferences, the skills bulleted by “☹” correlate with the least important, while the skills bulleted by “↔” were in the middle sector of preferences.

Table 5.7 A correlation between the Life Orientation themes and skills highlighting the Grade 9 learners preferences

Life Orientation themes	Life Orientation Skills
Learning Outcome 1: Health promotion: the learner will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health. She:	
♥ illustrates and evaluates the influence of ecological, social, economic, cultural and political factors on own personal choice of diet	☺ Decision-making skills ☺ Self-awareness skills
♥ develops and implements an environmental health programme	☹ Environmental education
♥ investigates personal and social factors that contribute to substance abuse and suggests appropriate responses and rehabilitation options	↔ Drug and alcohol education
♥ critically evaluates resources on health information, health services and a range of treatment options, including HIV/AIDS;	☺ Health education ↔ Problem-solving skills ☺ Thinking skills ☺ Assertiveness skills ☺ AIDS prevention
♥ discusses ways to apply insights gained from participating in an activity related to national health or a safety promotion programme.	☹ Co-operation skills ↔ Creativity ↔ Goal-setting skills ↔ Problem-solving skills

Life Orientation themes	Life Orientation Skills
Learning Outcome 2: Social development: the learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions. She:	
✎ debates issues with regard to citizens' rights and personal choices	☺ Assertiveness skills ➡ Human rights ☺ Legal rights
✎ reports on participation in or planning of the local celebration of a national day	☹ Co-operation skills ➡ Creativity ☺ Decision making ➡ Goal setting ➡ Problem solving
✎ critically discusses social relationships in a variety of situations	☹ Building social support systems ☹ Communication
✎ critically investigates issues of diversity in South Africa and ways in which to promote understanding of diverse cultures	☹ Diversity ➡ Countering prejudice and sexism ➡ Conflict resolution
✎ reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace.	☹ Religious education

Life Orientation themes	Life Orientation Skills
Learning Outcome 3: Personal development: the learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world. She:	
† analyses and reflects on positive personal qualities in a range of contexts	☺ Self-awareness skills ☺ Self-esteem skills
† critically discusses own rights and responsibilities in interpersonal relationships	☺ Legal rights ⊗ Socialisation ☺ Assertiveness ⊗ Building social support systems ⊗ Co-operation skills ↔ Coping with peer pressure ↔ Countering exploitation ⊗ Group skills ↔ Positive relationship formation with opposite sex ↔ Positive relationship formation with opposite peers ↔ Positive relationship formation with adults
† responds appropriately to emotions in challenging situations	☺ Thinking skills ↔ Stress management ↔ Coping with depression ↔ Coping with failure ⊗ Coping with rejection ↔ Coping with grief

† explains what has been learned from a challenging personal interaction by critically reflecting on own behaviour	↔ Constructive coping strategies
† applies goal-setting and decision-making strategies	↔ Goal-setting skills ☺ Decision-making skills
† critically evaluates own application of problem solving skills in a challenging situation	↔ Problem-solving skills ↔ Creativity

Life Orientation themes	Life Orientation Skills
Learning Outcome 4: Physical development and movement: the learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participation in, activities and promote movement and physical development. She:	
Y participates in and evaluates own performance in an adventurous recreational outdoor activity	☺ Self-awareness skills
Y refines and evaluates own and peer movement performance including rotation, balance and elevation	☺ Self-awareness skills ☺ Self-esteem skills
Y assesses own physical wellness level and sets personal goals for improvement	↔ Goal-setting skills ☺ Health Education

 critically evaluates and executes a game plan for individual or team sport	 Creativity  Decision-making skills  Group skills  Thinking skills
 reports on and discusses sport ethics	 Thinking skills  Communication skills

Life Orientation themes	Life Orientation Skills
Learning Outcome 5: Orientation in the world of work: the learner will be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices. She:	
 researches study and career funding providers	 Creativity  Problem-solving skills  Thinking skills
 motivates own career and study choices	 Career choice  Self-awareness skills  Self-esteem skills  Thinking skills  Value and interest clarification
 critically reflects and reports on opportunities in the workplace	 Thinking skills  Communication skills  Entrepreneurship
 discusses rights and responsibilities in	 Human rights

the workplace	 Legal rights ↔ Countering exploitation ↔ Countering prejudice and sexism
 outlines a plan for own lifelong learning	↔ Goal-setting skills ↔ Problem-solving skills ↔ Creativity ↔ Study methods.

From the table, it is clear that a number of skills that are addressed do meet the specific Life Orientation needs of the Grade 9 learners in this sample. The curriculum implements an integrated approach to each Life Orientation theme and it is clear that some skills are reinforced across the curriculum.

However, a number of the specific Life Orientation needs that are ranked within the 15 most important preferences of this sample are not addressed in the curriculum. These include:

- ↔ coping with AIDS/HIV;
- ↔ coping with retirement; and
- ↔ financial planning.

Life Orientation skills that Grade 9 learners rated as quite important, but are not adequately addressed in the curriculum are:

- ↔ coping with trauma;
- ↔ parenting skills;
- ↔ sexuality education;
- ↔ time management; and
- ↔ violence and abuse education.

All 15 least important preferences, with the exception of coping with change, are addressed in the current Grade 9 Life Orientation curriculum. These Life Orientation themes and skills are addressed and taught in the Intermediate

Phase (Grades 4 – 6) and are reinforced in the first year of the Senior Phase (Grade 7). It is thus a recommendation that these Life Orientation themes and skills should not be readdressed in the Senior Phase. The inference could be made that these needs have been sufficiently dealt with in previous grades and phases, hence this sample's dismissal of these Life Orientation needs as preferential.

5.7 CONCLUSION

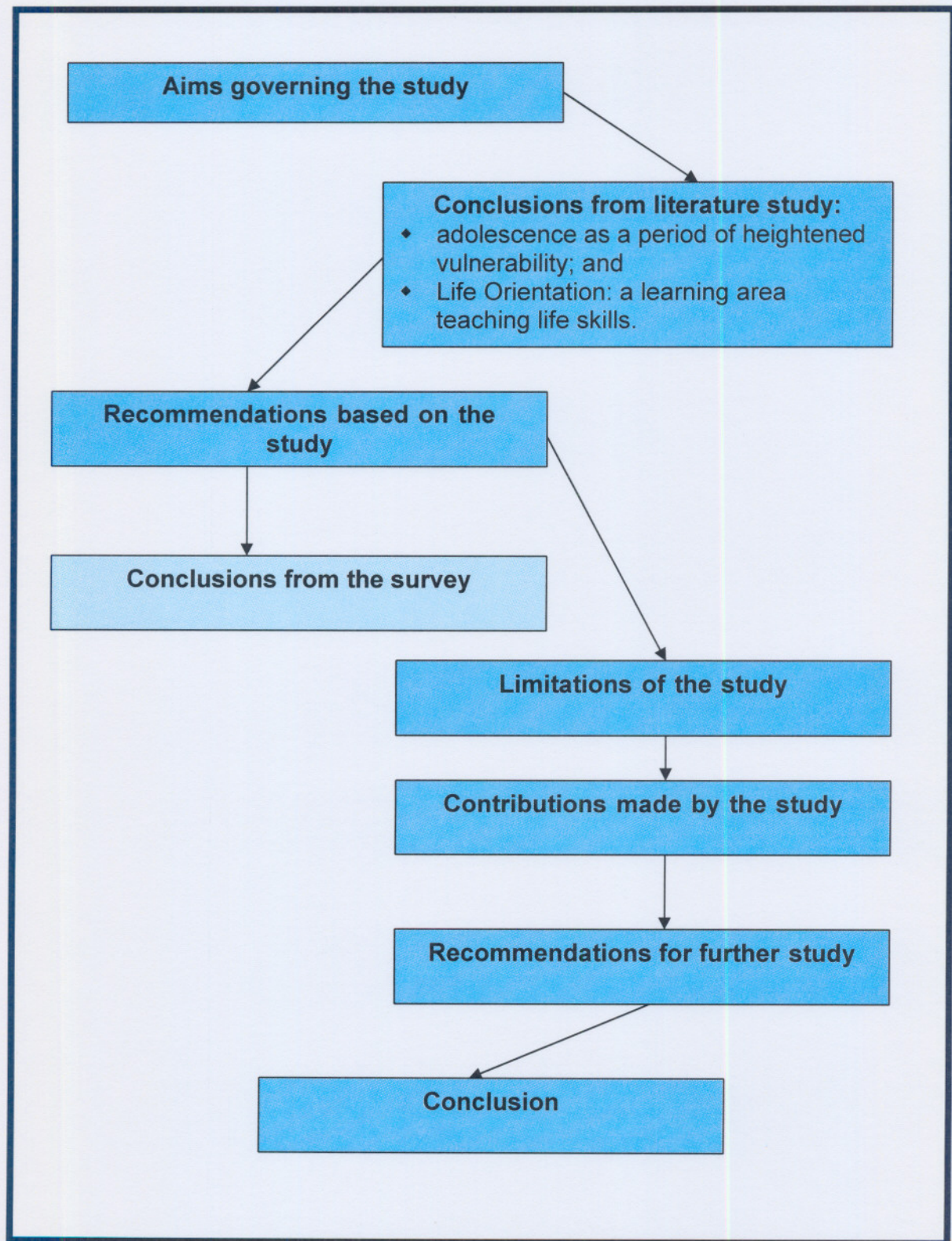
From the above, it is clear that the learners polled in this sample have unmistakable preferences with regard to Life Orientation. The most important Life Orientation skills are the same for both genders and for learners of different race groups. Hence, it would appear that the curriculum need not differentiate for gender or race.

It is also evident that the current curriculum does in fact address a great number of the Life Orientation skills that will equip learners with the necessary skills to lead meaningful lives. However, the curriculum fails to address all skills that learners in this sample ranked as most important. It is thus the researchers' contention that the current curriculum does not totally meet Life Orientation needs that are most important to the Grade 9 learner. Therefore, the extent to which the curriculum meets the learners' needs can improve. Recommendations pertaining to this statement will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW



6.2 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide a summary of the findings of this study and to elucidate the conclusions that can be deduced from these findings. The chapter will also provide a discussion of the conclusions from the survey and present recommendations based on the study. Recommendations for future research, as well as the limitations of this study will be discussed.

6.3 AIMS GOVERNING STUDY

The overall aim of this study is to investigate and identify the specific needs of Grade 9 learners within the identified learning area of Life Orientation.

The following table summarises the aims of this study and the achievements thereof:

Table 6.1 The aims and achievements of this study

AIM	ACHIEVEMENT
 To determine the nature of adolescence, with specific reference to adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability	☒ An intensive literature study was conducted into adolescent development. The influence of transformation on the physical, cognitive, affective and personality, social, normative and conative domains of development was researched. The link between such development and adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability was discussed.
 To determine the nature and scope of Life Orientation.	☒ Life Skills Education and South Africa's interpretation thereof was investigated. The nature and scope of this learning area

		was defined and the relevance of Life Orientation for the adolescent was researched. The relationship between adolescent domains of development and Life Orientation was examined.
 To determine the relevance of Life Orientation for the adolescent.	☒	The importance of Life Orientation for the adolescent, as well as for the society was investigated and confirmed.
 To consult with Grade 9 learners to determine their specific Life Orientation needs.	☒	Quantitative research, in the form of a survey, was conducted to gather data on the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners.
 To determine whether the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners differ according to gender and race?	☒	Through the use of statistical techniques (<i>t</i>-tests and Cohen's <i>D</i>-test) it was established that the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners do not differ according to gender and race.
 To examine whether these needs are met in the current Life Orientation programme.	☒	The Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs as identified by the sample population was compared to the Life Orientation themes that are currently presented in the Life Orientation curriculum. Conclusions were drawn as to

	the extent that the learners' needs are met in the current Life Orientation programme.
 To make recommendations regarding the relevance of the Life Orientation curriculum for Grade 9 learners.	☒ Recommendations pertaining to the relevance of the current Life Orientation curriculum are made in this chapter. These recommendations aim to make Life Orientation more relevant to the needs of the learners.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE STUDY

The following conclusions were drawn from the literature:

Table 6.2 Conclusions drawn from literature

Definition of adolescence	• Adolescence is a complex and challenging life stage where the adolescent moves from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood, accomplishing a number of developmental tasks during this phase of development. • Adolescence is characterised by the diversities and complexities of extensive development of psychological and physiological characteristics (Berger, 2003: 431; Abrahams <i>et al.</i>, 2002: 2; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 2; Mwamwenda, 1996: 63; Adams <i>et al.</i>, 1994: 5; Thom in Louw, 1993: 377).
Adolescent domains of development:	• Development within these domains occur at different rates in different adolescents.
Y Physical	• The physical development of the adolescent is

development	characterised by the increase of hormones, rapid growth spurt and primary and secondary sexual characteristics. ♦ The rise of hormone levels during puberty directly influences the physical development of the adolescent (Berger, 2003: 432; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 9; Rice, 1990: 118). ♦ The growth spurt is sudden, uneven, unpredictable and affects practically all skeletal and muscular dimensions resulting in an increase in weight and muscle and the growth of the internal organs; (Berger, 2003: 436; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 13). ♦ Adolescence is a period of sexual maturation. The primary sexual characteristics are directly involved in reproductive functions, while the secondary sexual characteristics concern sexual appearance (Berger, 2003: 439; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 14).
? Cognitive development	♦ Cognitive development accelerates markedly during adolescence. ♦ The rational and lateral way of thinking creates a critical frame of mind (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 38). ♦ Expanded memory skills develop ♦ Language mastery improves. ♦ Metacognition develops (Berger, 2003: 465). ♦ The adolescent develops concerns about social issues and identity. ♦ Hypothetical thought comes to the fore and traditional ways of thinking and solving problems are challenged (Berger, 2003: 466; Woolfolk, 1998:37). ♦ Abstract thoughts increase. ♦ Intuitive emotional thought relating to perceptions

♥ Affective and personality development	and self develops. ♦ Adolescent egocentrism manifests in the creation of imaginary audience, personal fable and invincibility fable (Berger, 2003: 472; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 41; Woolfolk, 1998: 37; Rice, 1990: 183). ♦ The typical affective profile of the adolescent is described as labile due to the heightened emotionality and emotional lability that is experienced (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 96). ♦ Search for “self” and “identity” are important aspects of affective maturity. ♦ Aspects of self include: possible, false, social and ideal self (Berger, 2003: 497 - 498). ♦ Identity encompasses gender and cultural identity, as well as a social context. ♦ The role of identity statuses is important. These include: identity achievement, identity foreclosure, identity diffusion, identity moratorium and negative identity (Berger, 2003: 499; Kroger, 2000: 145); ♦ Self-concept refers to the core of the personality which has an influence on the experience of life events, it evolves through self-evaluation of attitudes and perceptions (Kail <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 284; Woolfolk, 1998: 73; Rice, 1990: 220). ♦ Self-esteem is the sense of self worth and acceptance that the adolescent experiences (Woolfolk, 1998: 73; Rice, 1990: 232). ♦ An important aspect of self-esteem is the personal and collective self which refers to the way that the adolescent connects with others and her group membership (Woolfolk, 1998: 78).
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🏠 Social development	• Socialising is an important aspect of adolescent development (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 67). • The adolescent develops a number of social relations with parents, peers and members of the opposite gender. • The traditional control of the parents diminishes as the adolescent experiences increased independence which may lead to parent-adolescent conflict (Berger, 2003: 517, Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 73). • Style of parenting will influence the development of adolescent independence. • Peers fulfil the emotional needs of the adolescent from which support and strength are gained. • Peers help set behavioural and emotional boundaries as they practise social reinforcement. • Group acceptance and rejection affects the development of self-concept. • Conformity and peer pressure may have both positive and negative effects on the adolescent. • Homogenous relationships gradually progress toward heterosexual relationships (Berger, 2003: 519; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 75; Mwamwenda, 1996: 71; Rice, 1990: 346).
☑️ Normative development	• The adolescent establishes a personal value system in line with the principles, rules and norms of society (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 101) • Cognitive development, affective development, primary and secondary school educators and the peer group are factors which correlate with moral development (Gouws & Kruger, 1994: 180). • Religious development is instrumental in defining

☺ Conative development	right and wrong, good and evil. • Characteristics of religious development include religious awakening, religious doubt and religious revival (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 116). • The development of the adolescent's will which includes aspiration, choice and a decision. • Factors which influence the adolescent's conative life are the family situation, the school, the peer group and mass media (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 148). • Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play an important role in the development of the adolescent's conative life (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 59 - 60). • Choice and decision-making culminate the adolescent's act of will (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 147).
Adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability – vulnerabilities associated with domains of development Υ Physical development	Adolescence and its concomitant changes have the potential of augmenting vulnerability in the following ways: Psychological effects: • heightened emotional response (Berger, 2003: 441); • acceptance or rejection of body image (Berger, 2003: 441; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 22); • maturation rate – too early or too late (Berger, 2003: 444; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 24; Mwamwenda, 1996: 69); and

	• reactions to sexual impulses (Berger, 2003: 445). Health hazards: • nutritional deficiencies (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 30); • dieting as a disease (Berger, 2003: 442; Le Grange & Lock, 2002: 16 – 20); and • substance use and abuse (Pretorius <i>et al.</i>, 2003: 1).
? Cognitive development	• Increased risk-taking behaviour and ignorance of consequences; • miscalculation of probabilities; • rebellion against authority; and • criticism of parents' discrepancies, resulting in increased conflict with parents (Berger, 2003: 487; Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 44).
♥ Affective and personality development	• Increased stress on macro-, meso- and microlevels (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 147; Woodbridge, 1998: 46 – 47); • emotional difficulties due to stress reactions (Donald <i>et al.</i>, 2002: 350); • development of depression (Rey & Wever, 1996: 28); • development of general anxiety disorder (Wicks-Nelson & Israel; 1998: 125; Rice, 1990: 241); and • the experience of problems with socialisation such as delinquency (Mash & Wolfe, 2005: 145 – 149).
✦ Social development	♦ Development of inappropriate sexual attitudes and behaviour (Gouws <i>et al.</i>, 2000: 110 –111); and ♦ juvenile delinquency (Biven, 2002: 40; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000: 305; Pretorius, 1998: 290).

☒☒ Normative development	• Rebellion against societal norms, thus experiencing rejection by peers and adults; • delinquency; • substance abuse; • irresponsible sexual activity; • negative influence on formation of relationships; • poor academic progress; and • lack of meaning and purpose of life (cf. 2.4.5.3).
☺ Conative development	• Negative self-concept and self-esteem formation; • underdeveloped decision-making skills; and • lack of motivation (cf. 2.3.6.6).

↪ Defining life skills	Life skills are the skills that: • are non-academic abilities, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours necessary for successful living and learning; • enhance the quality of life; • prevent dysfunctional behaviour; • are necessary for the development and improvement of the individual's personal competencies that are needed for effective living and participation in the community; • give people the tools they need for perceiving or responding to diverse life situations; and • enable the individual to adapt and master her life situations at home, school, work and any other context in which she may find herself (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 43; Junge <i>et al.</i>, 2003: 166; Donald <i>et al.</i>, 2002: 156; Rooth, 2000: 1; Du Toit 1997:6).
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→ South Africa's interpretation of Life Skills Education	• The National curriculum –Curriculum 2005 which is based on Outcomes-Based Education – defines 8 learning areas of which Life Orientation is one (Department of education, 2002: 2).
→ Life Orientation as a learning area	• Life Skills Education has become an integral component of Life Orientation. • Life Orientation is concerned with the social, physical, personal, emotional and intellectual development of learners. • Life Orientation aims to: ➤ guide and prepare learners for a meaningful and successful life; ➤ equip learners with coping skills to face the challenges of a South African society; ➤ develop skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that empower learners to make informed decisions and to take appropriate actions; and ➤ teach learners to: ✓ exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities; ✓ respect the rights of others; and ✓ show tolerance for cultural and religious diversity in order to build a democratic society (Department of education, 2002: 4 - 6).
→ Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards for Life Orientation	Learning Outcome 1: ♥ Health promotion ; Learning Outcome 2: 🏠 Social development; Learning Outcome 3: 👤 Personal development;

Types and purposes of assessment → Life Orientation as a critical learning area for the adolescent	Learning Outcome 4: Y Physical development and movement; and Learning Outcome 5: •  Orientation in the world of work (cf. 3.3.1.3 for a detailed explanation of the above-mentioned Learning Outcomes) . • Assessment Standards are the criteria for what the learner is expected to achieve; and • Assessment Principles are the strategies used to assess that a learner has achieved what is required in each grade (Department of Education, 2002: 40 - 49). Assessment is an important part of OBE and seven types of assessment can be used in order to achieve different goals (cf. 3.3.1.4.1; 3.3.1.4.2; 3.3.1.4.3) • Adolescence is considered a period of self-exploration and experimentation and thus an increase in risk-taking behaviour occurs. • The adolescent is in need of guidance and empowerment in order to meet the challenges associated with adolescence. • By acquiring the relevant life skills during the appropriate stage of development, the adolescent will achieve optimal functioning (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 101; Junge <i>et al.</i>, 2003: 166; Kadish <i>et al.</i>, 2001: 2; Rooth, 2000: 2; Du Toit 1997:6; ANON, 1994: 8). • Life Orientation provides a vehicle for the navigation of this important phase of life.
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→ Life skills acquired in Life Orientation	• Life Skills Education is a crucial division of Life Orientation. ♦ Life Orientation aims to develop programmes to support and reinforce skills and competencies for adulthood (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Ncgobo, 2002: 96). ♦ Life Orientation can provide the opportunity for young people to talk about fears, experiences and myths they harbour about the challenges of adolescence; and ♦ Life Orientation is important for society, as Life Skills Education is critical in the development of an adult society that is well adjusted and socially competent (Bender & Lombard, 2004: 88; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003: 43; Malaka, 2003: 381; Hull & Stern, 2002: 35; ANON, 1994: 8). ♦ Domains of adolescent development are closely connected to the challenges associated with this life stage. ♦ A close relationship between the Learning Outcomes of Life Orientation and the domains of development exists (cf. 3.4.2.2). → assertiveness skills (Donald <i>et al.</i>, 1997: 130); → career education (Stead & Watson, 1999:164); → communication skills (Donald <i>et al.</i>, 1997: 117; Vaughn <i>et al.</i>, 1997: 110); → creativity skills (Egan, 1998: 227; Woolfolk, 1998: 318); → conflict management skills (Rooth, 2000: 100); → critical thinking skills (Woolfolk, 1998: 318); → goal-setting skills (Egan, 1998: 239; Gillis,1994: 36);
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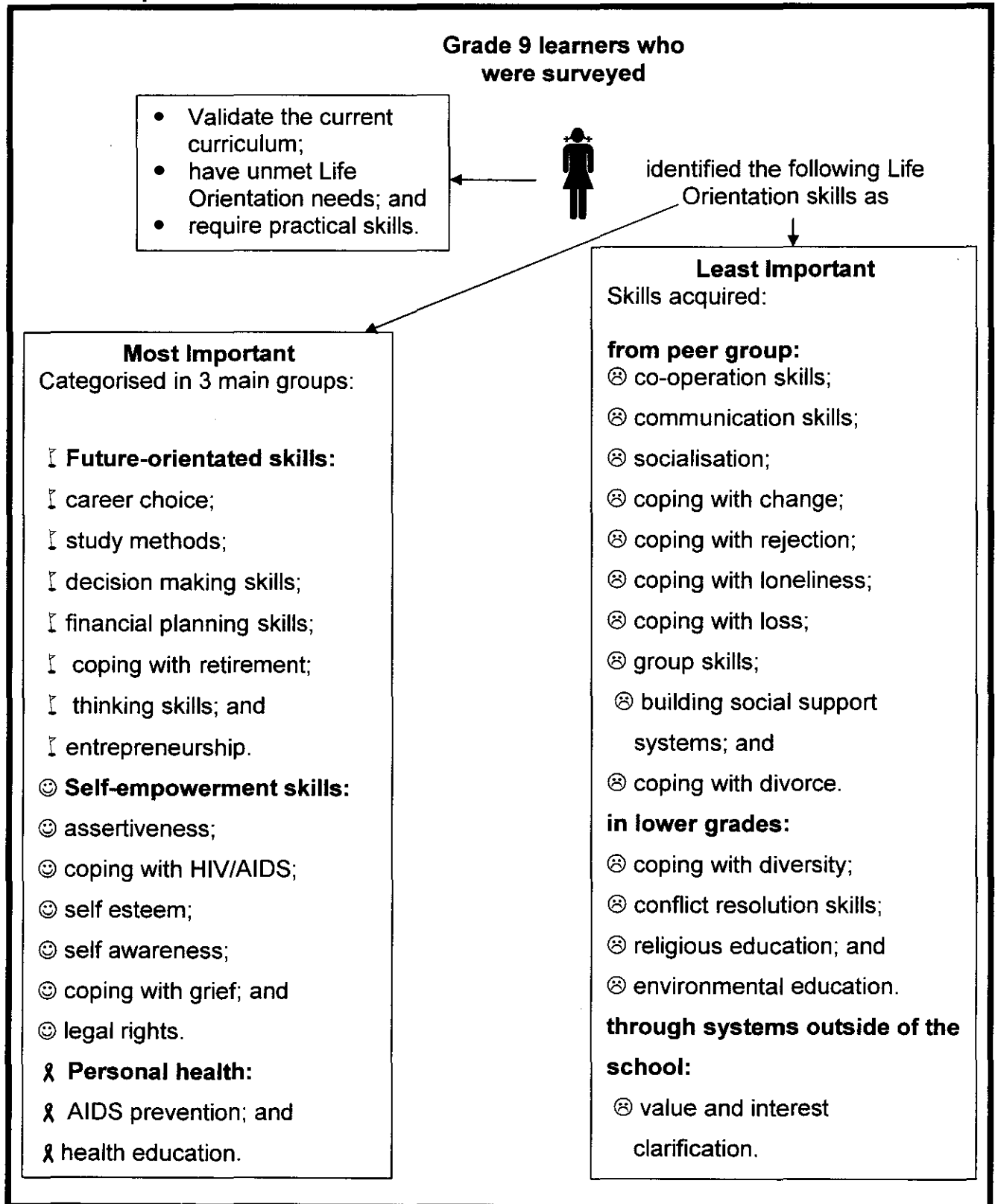
Research in South Africa pertaining to Life Orientation themes:	➤ handling and expressing emotions (Pretorius <i>et al.</i>, 2003: 3); ➤ health promotion and maintenance skills (Abrahams <i>et al.</i>, 2002: 2; Hull & Stern, 2002: 35); ➤ interpersonal, social and group skills (Kadish <i>et al.</i>, 2001: 1; Vaughn <i>et al.</i>, 2001: 1); ➤ negotiation skills (Covey, 1989: 207); ➤ problem-solving and decision-making skills (Rooth, 2000: 54; Donald <i>et al.</i>, 1997: 213; Gillis, 1994: 47); ➤ skills to develop self-esteem, self-concept and identity (Kadish <i>et al.</i>, 2001: 3; Rooth, 2000: 70); ➤ stress management (Woodbridge, 1998: 50); ➤ sexuality education and HIV/AIDS education (Strydom, 2003: 59; Donald <i>et al.</i>, 211) ; ➤ study skills (Vaughn <i>et al.</i>, 1997: 488); and ➤ substance use and abuse (Hahn <i>et al.</i>, 2002:1). Recent research concerning Life Orientation themes has been conducted in South Africa by the following researchers on the following Life Orientation themes: ♦ Malaka (2003) – Sexual behaviour and substance abuse; ♦ Ncgobo (2002) – Sexual behaviour; ♦ Marais (1998) – Guidance needs of Standard 10 pupils; and ♦ Bender and Lombard (2004) – Personal and interpersonal effects of a Life Skills Programme on Grade 7 learners.
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6.5 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY

This survey served the purpose of assessing the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners. The learners themselves were consulted and their opinion regarding the importance of the Life Orientation themes and life skills were polled. Conclusions regarding the results of the survey are:

- Grade 9 learners are very aware and conscious of their Life Orientation needs, and these have been ranked in order of importance as represented in the figure below:

Figure 6.1 Most and least important preferences for Grade 9 learners in this sample



Further general conclusions can be made. These include:

- No significant gender or racial differences exist with regard to the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners.
- The Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners in this sample are very practical and future-orientated.
- The needs reflect the skills required for adolescents to cope with the challenges associated with the modern day South African lifestyle.
- The socio-economic realities and challenges of South Africa are reflected in the ranking of Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs.
- A correlation between the identified preferences and the current Life Orientation themes exist. A large percentage of the needs identified as most important and important are addressed in the current Grade 9 Life Orientation curriculum. The survey thus validates the claim that the majority of Life Orientation needs that this sample identified as very important are addressed by the curriculum.
- The Life Orientation curriculum (from Foundation Phase through to the Senior Phase) initiates the acquisition of life skills. Some of the skills are duplicated in the curriculum for senior learners and therefore Grade 9 learners may feel that some Life Orientation themes are superfluous as they have already been dealt with.
- The Grade 9 learners in this sample do, however, have unmet Life Orientation needs as indicated in the survey. These are needs that this sample identified as very important, but that are not addressed in the curriculum. Additions to the curriculum or modification thereof in order to cater for these unmet needs should be made, resulting in a curriculum that addresses the specific needs associated with the challenges these learners face in the current South African reality, as well as during adolescence.

- The preferences of this sample are very practical in nature and because of this, the Life Orientation curriculum for Grade 9 should focus on equipping learners with practical skills required for success in all domains of development.

Conclusions pertaining to the most important preferences include:

- ☺ The most important Life Orientation preferences identified in this survey are indicative of the social, economic and personal needs of adolescents living in modern day South Africa.
- ☺ These needs can be categorised into three groups, namely future-orientated skills, self-empowerment skills and personal health skills.
- ☺ The most important Life Orientation need for Grade 9 learners in this sample is one that is future-orientated, namely career choice. Knowledge concerning various career options and study directions is important in order for these learners to pursue a career that will empower them financially and personally.
- ☺ The acquisition of skills to achieve financial success and stability is a further need that the learners in this sample identified as important. These skills are also future-orientated and will equip the adolescent with the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with the financial challenges they may face in the future.
- ☺ Thinking skills and decision-making skills are also very important skills for Grade 9 learners in this sample as these learners are placed in situations where they need to make critical decisions with regard to their future, health and education;
- ☺ Personal health is a very important preference for this group of Grade 9 learners. The survey indicated that these learners presented a great need to be equipped with the relevant skills in order to prevent HIV

infection, as well as, skills and knowledge that promote a healthy lifestyle.

- ☺ Self-empowerment skills, such as self-esteem, self-awareness and assertiveness are ranked as very important among this sample of learners.
- ☺ Grade 9 learners in this sample further seek to be empowered with knowledge and skills that will benefit and protect them with regard to their legal rights.
- ☺ Five Life Orientation needs that learners ranked within the top 15 preferences are not addressed in the current curriculum. These are: coping with AIDS/HIV, coping with grief, coping with retirement, financial planning and study methods.
- ☺ The identified skills are interrelated and co-dependent, as development of one of these skills can promote the development of further Life Orientation skills. These skills promote the adolescent's holistic development and will empower the adolescent to achieve a successful and meaningful life.

Conclusions pertaining to the least important preferences include:

- ☹ The Life Orientation skills that have been identified as least important are abstract and are of such a nature that one may develop and improve on these skills with life experience.
- ☹ The least important preference as identified by this survey is coping with loneliness. It is possible that during this stage of adolescence many adolescents have developed friendships and coping mechanisms, which help them to cope with loneliness. The Grade 9 learners in this survey have identified priorities that surpass the need to cope with loneliness.

- ⊗ A number of life skills that are addressed in the current curriculum are of such a nature that the learners may acquire these informally (by means of experience and the peer group) and have thus been ranked by the learners as least important.
- ⊗ Effective Life Orientation programmes presented in earlier grades and phases have addressed a number of the Life Orientation themes and life skills which the learners in this survey now rank as least important.
- ⊗ Some life skills may also be addressed in other learning areas due to the integration of themes across the learning areas and as a result, they may have declined accordingly in importance.
- ⊗ The current Grade 9 Life Orientation curriculum addresses a number of skills that learners identified as least important. This could possibly create the idea among the learners that Life Orientation is not a dynamic and relevant learning area. These skills include group skills, communication, coping with diversity and cooperation skills.

Overall it would seem that the most important needs of the learners in this sample are addressed by the current curriculum. However, there are skills that learners do not wish to have emphasised and there are also curriculum deficiencies according to the survey informing this study. For this reason, the following recommendations are made.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE STUDY

The survey investigated the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners with the goal of assessing the extent to which the current Life Orientation curriculum meets these needs.

The following recommendations pertaining to Life Orientation as a learning area and to the curriculum have been made:

- ★ Policy writers and curriculum developers should closely consider the top 15 Life Orientation needs of the learners in this sample and redirect the curriculum in order to meet these needs.

- ★ The Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards of the current Grade 9 Life Orientation curriculum could be rewritten in order to address these needs as identified by the learners. Assessment Standards are used in order to determine whether learners have attained the specific Learning Outcome. Furthermore, Assessment Standards prescribe certain activities which relate to the attainment of the Learning Outcome. Should the Assessment Standards include more activities that address the needs of the learners, then Life Orientation will become a dynamic and relevant learning area.

- ★ Life Orientation programmes of the future should be sensitive and relevant to the needs of adolescents. Learners' needs should be surveyed at regular intervals in order to assess the relevance of the Life Orientation themes and the Assessment Standards thereof.

- ★ A core curriculum for Life Orientation should be determined and a number of additional Life Orientation themes and skills should be available from which educators can select appropriate themes to meet the needs of the Grade 9 learners at their schools.

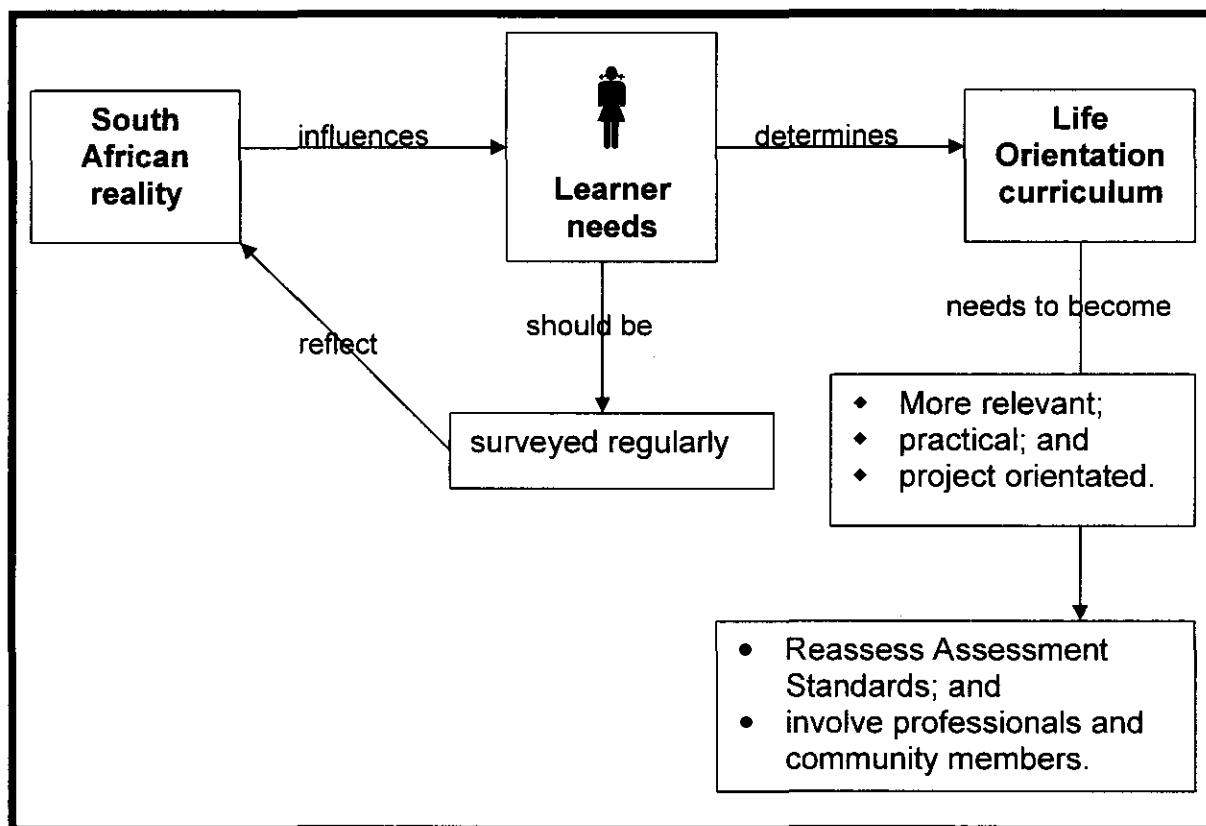
- ★ Learners should feel that the curriculum is relevant to their needs so that they will show ownership and commitment towards the learning area.

- ★ The Life Orientation programmes should reflect the indigenous character of South Africa. South Africans should thus develop the content of the programmes for the South African learner. The developmental challenges of the South African adolescent correlate with those of adolescents in other parts of the world. However, the South African adolescent will face specific challenges associated with the lifestyle of our society and the Life

Orientation programmes should equip the adolescent with the necessary skills in order to overcome the challenges that the South African adolescent faces successfully.

- ★ Life Orientation programmes should be modified from time to time in order to reflect the changes in the economic and social realities of South Africa. Adjustments to the curriculum should be made accordingly.
- ★ The Life Orientation curriculum could become less theoretical in Grade 9 and more practical where learners can experience hands-on projects. In so doing, learners are afforded the opportunity to practise the skills that they have acquired thus far and in practising these skills, the learners will continue to develop life skills.
- ★ Projects associated with real-life situations could be given to the learners. The challenge of managing these projects will lead to the culmination of the skills, knowledge and values that have been taught during the phases of schooling.
- ★ Assessment within the Life Orientation learning area may take on different forms as learners should be assessed in these practical projects. The educator may not be the only person who evaluates the learners. Instead the trained people who present courses will need to be involved in the assessment of tasks and projects.
- ★ Educators, external practitioners and trained people (from churches, Non-Governmental Organisations and government educational support personnel) should be consulted and co-opted into developing and presenting Life Orientation programmes. A multidisciplinary team approach towards Life Orientation programmes will be beneficial to the adolescent, the school and the community as a whole.

Figure 6.2 Summative diagram of recommendations pertaining to the Life Orientation curriculum



Recommendations pertaining to the learners' most important preferences:

- ★ An intensive career guidance programme should be presented to Grade 9 learners. This programme should be ongoing during the year. Experiential involvement should be implemented. The programme should expose Grade 9 learners to the job market through visits to companies, corporations, industries and practitioners. The learners will thus be exposed to the realities of the careers that they are interested in. Furthermore, the learners will be able to base their career choices on practical knowledge which they have gained from this exposure. This recommendation promotes the vision of the Department of Education that Grade 9 learners could enter the job market after they have completed the General Education and Training Phase by entering into apprenticeships and places of training. A practical career programme would meet the most important Life Orientation need as identified by this Grade 9 sample. In

addition to, this learners will also acquire and practise other life skills such as decision-making, thinking skills, goal-setting and cooperation;

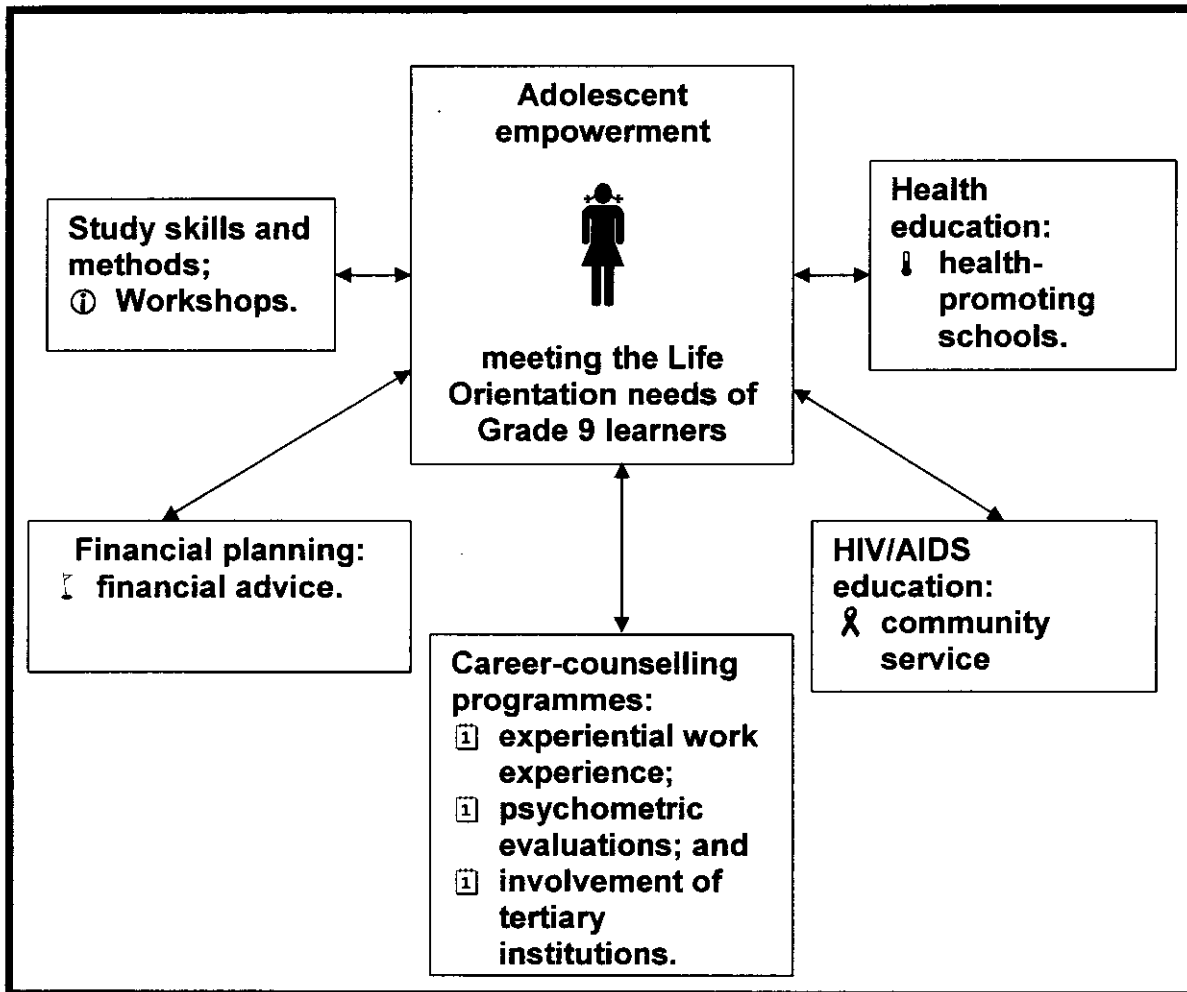
- ★ Psychometric evaluations to assist learners in making subject choices and career counselling to guide learners towards a career decision should be available at schools. In order to make this service accessible to and less expensive for more learners, this service could be provided in conjunction with tertiary institutions where psychology students can administer these assessments as part of the practical component of their assessment and evaluation courses. A closer working relationship between schools and universities could result in a mutually beneficial association
- ★ Grade 9 learners should also be afforded the opportunity to visit tertiary institutions in order to gain knowledge of the requirements for specific courses. This will assist learners to set academic goals.
- ★ Exposure to the world of work and study may dispel certain misperceptions associated with particular careers and study possibilities may be broadened.
- ★ Intensive study skills and methods, possibly in the form of workshops presented by experts, should be offered to Grade 9 learners. Furthermore, these skills should be practised and reinforced in other learning areas. The skills should be practical so that the learners can implement these and experience positive results.
- ★ The focus of HIV/AIDS education should be broadened in order to address the specific challenges that adolescents face with regard to coping with and caring for people who are infected with the virus. The emotional, physical and mental demands on the adolescent who is caring for someone with HIV/AIDS often affects the adolescent's development and she will need to be equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills in

order to cope effectively. Coping with grief would thus also be an important component of this Life Orientation theme.

- ★ A component of community service should be included in the Life Orientation curriculum. Grade 9 learners should be afforded the opportunity to serve at homes, clinics and hospitals where care is given to the HIV terminally ill or where orphaned and abandoned HIV children are cared for. This practical exposure relates to the survey in that learners will be exposed to the realities of HIV/AIDS. In addition to this, the learners will experience the medical, physical and emotional care that AIDS patients require. The additional life skills, such as health education and co-operation, which learners will develop under such conditions will be beneficial to them. Ultimately, the consequences of high risk sexual behaviour may become a greater reality to the adolescent.
- ★ Health education which promotes skills that teach learners to be physically and mentally healthy should also be taught in conjunction with experts. Skills that empower learners to enjoy healthy nutrition, cooking and exercise will have long-term benefits. Grade 9 learners could be required to develop programmes that promote personal growth, wellness and healthy relationships, in so doing developing health-promoting schools (Marx, Wooley & Northrop, 1998: 28).
- ★ Grade 9 learners indicated financial planning as an important Life Orientation skill. Involving the expertise of financial advisors to teach learners basic financial skills, such as budgeting and opening a bank account, is important.

A summary of these recommendations follows:

Figure 6.3 Summative diagram of recommendations pertaining to the most important preferences of Grade 9 learners surveyed



6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to consult with Grade 9 learners, to establish the specific Life Orientation needs that they have and to determine the extent to which the current Life Orientation curriculum meets these needs. In order to achieve this goal a sample population group was chosen and the survey was administered to these learners.

The first set of limitations of the study are related to the choice of the sample population:

- The survey was administered to Grade 9 learners from the Vaal Triangle, which forms part of the Gauteng province. The survey focussed mainly on

a limited number of learners from a specific area, thus excluding the learners in the remaining 8 provinces.

- Furthermore, the Vaal Triangle is an industrial urban area and the Life Orientation needs of the learners reflect the specific needs associated with the lifestyle and challenges of the people living in this particular area. Learners in rural areas may well have differing needs.
- In addition to this, the socio-economic status of the population of the Vaal Triangle is not indicative of the general population of South Africa. The Life Orientation needs of the sample population may reflect the socio-economic needs and challenges of Grade 9 learners specific to the Vaal Triangle and not necessarily the needs of all learners throughout South Africa.

A limitation of this study is thus that the Life Orientation needs of the diverse population of Grade 9 learners throughout South Africa have not been measured.

The second set of limitations relate to the assessment of the Life Orientation curriculum:

- The study measured the needs of a particular grade within the Senior Phase. The Life Orientation needs of the Senior Phase (Grades 7 – 9) were not surveyed.
- The study does not assess the extent to which the Grade 9 learners feel that the curriculum addresses their needs.

6.8 CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY THE STUDY

The study has made the following contributions:

- ☒ To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study done in South Africa to determine the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners.

- ☒ The survey questionnaire is a contribution made by this study as it is a valid and reliable research instrument that can be used to determine the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners.
- ☒ The survey questionnaire can also be adapted for other grades.
- ☒ The findings of current literature were integrated and summarised in table and diagram form, facilitating an easy overview of the current literature.
- ☒ The most important contribution from the researcher's point of view is that the Grade 9 learners were consulted and their specific Life Orientation needs have been established.
- ☒ The research shows that the specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners are very practical and future-orientated. The first priority of the learners is career guidance: learners desire knowledge and skills that will empower them to make effective decisions with regard to pursuing a career and financial stability for the future.
- ☒ The study provides a correlation between the results of the learners' Life Orientation needs and the current Life Orientation curriculum in order to assess which of the Grade 9 Life Orientation needs are indeed met by the current Life Orientation curriculum. As a result, the study lends credence to and validates the current curriculum through a multicultural sample.
- ☒ This study identifies disparity in the current curriculum and possibly to rectify this by recommending the inclusion and exclusion of relevant and irrelevant themes.

The researcher is of the opinion that this study will provide curriculum writers and Life Orientation educators with the necessary information to make Life Orientation a learning area that meets the specific needs of Grade 9 learners as identified by the learners themselves. The Life Orientation curriculum could thus become more needs-orientated.

6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study does not address all the aspects of assessing the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners. It is thus hoped that this study will motivate other researchers to conduct further studies, such as:

- ? Consult Grade 9 learners in other provinces, thus creating a nation wide survey of the specific Life Orientation needs of these learners.
- ? Possibly assess the Life Orientation needs of learners in the Senior Phase (Grades 7 – 9).
- ? Consult with the Grade 9 learners as to the extent to which the current curriculum meets their specific Life Orientation needs.
- ? Assess the relevance of Life Orientation for the South African adolescent.

6.10 CONCLUSION

Adolescence is a complex and exciting period of transition from childhood to adulthood. The complexities of this life stage are elicited by the changes that the adolescent experiences due to her physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. Firstly, this study set out to define adolescence and the developmental tasks associated with this time of transition. Secondly, the domains of development were investigated in order to establish the challenges associated with adolescent development that cause adolescence to be a period of heightened vulnerability. Furthermore, this study described adolescence as a period of heightened vulnerability. The study deduced that the adolescent requires life skills in order to empower her to meet the challenges of adolescence successfully.

Conclusions drawn from research suggest that the adolescent should acquire a number of life skills in order to cope effectively with the challenges

associated with this period of heightened vulnerability. The acquisition of life skills during this life stage will thus empower the adolescent to lead a meaningful life. South Africa's interpretation of Life Skills Education namely, Life Orientation, was examined by firstly determining the nature and scope of this learning area, thus establishing its importance for both the adolescent and for society. Thereafter, the relationship between Life Orientation and the domains of adolescent development was described. Consequently, the necessity of the life skills that are acquired in Life Orientation was established. Furthermore, the importance of and need for Life Orientation was recognised.

Grade 9 learners were consulted in order to establish their specific Life Orientation needs. The data from the research was used to investigate the extent to which the Grade 9 learners' Life Orientation needs are met by the current curriculum. A correlation between the current Life Orientation themes and the learners' preferences generally gave credence to the current curriculum.

The importance of the learning area Life Orientation surpasses the academic structures of a school system. The skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in this learning area are not merely learned for assessment purposes. Neither are these limited to a particular phase in the learner's education. Instead, these life skills can transcend the boundaries of school and empower learners to confront the challenges and tasks of adolescence and to continue to live through a meaningful and successful adulthood.

The results of this study are central to empowering adolescents beyond the following:

i'm just another troubled teen
raging hormones of sweet sixteen
this pain that tears my soul apart
the dark red tears that wet my heart
i wade in pools of fallen hopes
in empty darkness my spirit gropes
but despair and fear and pain
they've seen it time and time again
i'm at that age they all tell me
it'll fade in time dear child, you'll see
i'm just another troubled teen
and this is life at sweet sixteen

source: www.sateenz.co.za

**"We cannot always build a future for our youth, but we can
build our youth for the future."
Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882 – 1945)**

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Addendum

Covering Letter

8 September 2004

Dear Principal

I am a M.Ed. student in Educational Psychology at the North West University, Vaal Triangle Campus under the guidance of Dr. L Theron.

I am researching the Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners, in order to assess whether the current Life Orientation curriculum meets the needs of the learners. Included you will find a questionnaire that identifies the Life Orientation skills that the Grade 9 learners need to rate as important.

I will appreciate it if I could come to your school and administer the questionnaire on the Grade 9 learners in the week of 4 to 8 October 2004.

Their anonymity is guaranteed.

Your co-operation is sincerely appreciated. If you need any more information please contact me at (016)-981 – 1396.

Yours sincerely

Christine Dalzell

Addendum B

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Your race

Black	Coloured	Indian	White
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Your gender

Male	Female
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Instructions

In your opinion how important are the following Life Orientation Skills? Circle the appropriate number.

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not important
1. Assertiveness (skills that teach you to stand up for your rights).	1	2	3	4
2. AIDS prevention (skills that teach you how to avoid being infected with HIV/AIDS).	1	2	3	4
3. Coping with HIV/AIDS (skills that teach you how to cope when you or someone close to you has AIDS).	1	2	3	4
4. Building social support systems (skills that teach you to establish reliable social support networks to help you cope with problems).	1	2	3	4
5. Career choices (skills that enable you to make wise career choice and help you search for employment).	1	2	3	4
6. Co-operation (skills that teach you to have meaningful partnerships with people).	1	2	3	4
7. Communication (skills that teach you to get your message across effectively).	1	2	3	4
8. Conflict resolution (skills that teach you to solve disagreements effectively).	1	2	3	4
9. Constructive coping strategies (skills that teach you to deal with difficult situations effectively).	1	2	3	4
10. Coping with change (skills that teach you how to handle change positively).	1	2	3	4
11. Coping with depression (skills that help you to identify the symptoms of depression and teach you how to deal with them).	1	2	3	4
12. Coping with diversity (skills that teach you to deal with people who are culturally, and physically different from you).	1	2	3	4
13. Coping with divorce (skills that help you to deal with the effects of a divorce or parental separation).	1	2	3	4
14. Coping with failure (skills that teach you to deal with lack of success).	1	2	3	4
15. Coping with grief (skills that help you to manage the loss or death of a loved one).	1	2	3	4

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not important
16. Coping with loneliness (skills that teach you to become more sociable).	1	2	3	4
17. Coping with loss (skills that help you to deal with the loss of valuable people or possessions).	1	2	3	4
18. Coping with peer pressure (skills that help you to manage peer pressure in a positive manner).	1	2	3	4
19. Coping with rejection (skills that help you to deal with negative responses from people).	1	2	3	4
20. Coping with retirement (skills that teach you to plan ahead for the future).	1	2	3	4
21. Coping with trauma (skills that teach you to deal with violence, crime, disasters).	1	2	3	4
22. Countering exploitation (skills that teach you not to be taken advantage of).	1	2	3	4
23. Countering prejudice and sexism (skills that teach you not to judge people based on their race or gender).	1	2	3	4
24. Creativity (skills that teach you to think and act creatively).	1	2	3	4
25. Democracy (skills that teach you to be independent).	1	2	3	4
26. Decision-making (skills that teach you to make the best and most sensible decisions).	1	2	3	4
27. Drug and alcohol education (skills that will help you to identify the risks and hazards associated with the use of drugs and alcohol).	1	2	3	4
28. Entrepreneurship (skills that teach you to become self-employed).	1	2	3	4
29. Environmental education (skills that teach you to appreciate and care for the environment).	1	2	3	4
30. Financial planning skills (skills that teach you to work effectively with money and how to save it).	1	2	3	4
31. Goal-setting (skills that teach you to set realistic short- and long-term goals).	1	2	3	4
32. Group skills (skills that teach you to be an acceptable and effective team member).	1	2	3	4
33. Health education (skills that teach you to be physically and mentally healthy).	1	2	3	4
34. Human rights (skills that teach you about your basic human rights).	1	2	3	4

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not important
35. Legal rights (skills that teach you about your basic legal rights).	1	2	3	4
36. Parenting skills (skills that will empower you for the future as parents).	1	2	3	4
37. Positive relationship formation with peers (skills that teach you to have positive relationships with people of your own age).	1	2	3	4
38. Positive relationship formation with the opposite sex (skills that teach you to have positive male/female relationships).	1	2	3	4
39. Positive relationship formation with adults (skills that teach you to have positive relationships with adults).	1	2	3	4
40. Problem-solving (skills that teach you to solve problems effectively).	1	2	3	4
41. Religious Education (skills that teach you to understand and appreciate various religions)	1	2	3	4
42. Self-awareness (skills that help you to discover who you are).	1	2	3	4
43. Self-esteem (skills that teach you to value yourself).	1	2	3	4
44. Sexuality education (skills that teach you about the physical and emotional aspects and the health risks involved in sexual activity).	1	2	3	4
45. Socialisation (skills that teach you how to socialise appropriately with different people in different situations).	1	2	3	4
46. Stress management (skills that teach you to cope with and manage stress).	1	2	3	4
47. Study methods (skills that teach you to study effectively producing good results).	1	2	3	4
48. Thinking skills (skills that teach you to think critically and plan sensibly before acting).	1	2	3	4
49. Time management (skills that teach you to plan your time effectively).	1	2	3	4
50. Value and interest clarification (skills that help you to identify your values and interests).	1	2	3	4
51. Violence and abuse education (skills that empower you to identify abuse and how to deal effectively with it).	1	2	3	4