Teachers' understanding and managing of religious and cultural diversity in an independent Islamic school

By

Mogamat Habib Kagee

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Supervisor: Professor Doria Daniels

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis, I, declare that the entirety of the work contained herein is my own, original work, which I am the sole author thereof (save when explicitly stated), and that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights. I have not previously submitted this thesis or any part of it for the purpose of obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers" understanding of inclusive education within an independent Islamic school. The research was designed to explore the way the values and principles of tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity might be accommodated or promoted within an independent Islamic school in South Africa. Such schools are guided by the aims and objectives of Islamic education, as defined at the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah, Saudi Arabia in 1977. However, such schools are also bound by the aims and objectives of inclusive education, as propagated by the Department of Education, which strives to promote religious and cultural diversity within a democratic society. In this study the views and experiences of nine teachers with regard to inclusivity, cultural and religious tolerance and democratic citizenship were researched. It was argued that teachers and schools represent the earliest opportunity for learners to develop meaningful relationships with and positive attitudes towards others; this enables learners to feel valued and included as citizens within a democratic and diverse society.

This qualitative study was limited to one independent Islamic school in the Western Cape. The data was collected through semi-structured personal and focus group interviews and was analysed within an interpretive paradigm.

The findings were that whilst the participants agreed that access to the school should be open to all learners irrespective of religion, most felt that non-Muslim learners should be taught separately. Though a school environment should promote tolerance and respectful attitudes towards learners from different cultures and backgrounds, the participants supported a school ethos that was founded on Islamic principles. The main recommendation of this study is that the independent Islamic schools should give careful consideration to their role within society if they wish to create a democratic citizenry and promote religious and cultural diversity.

ABSTRAK

Die doel van hierdie studie was om onderwysers se begrip van insluitende opvoeding binne 'n onafhanklike Islamitiese skool te eksploreer. Die navorsing was ontwerp om te eksploreer hoe die waardes en beginsels van verdraagsaamheid en respek vir godsdiens en kulturele diversiteit geakkommodeer en bevorder kan word binne 'n Islamitiese skool in Suid-Afrika. Hierdie tipe skole volg die doelwitte en doelstellings van Islamitiese opvoeding, soos gedefinieer by die Eerste Wêreld Konferensie oor Moslem Opvoeding in Makkah, Saudi Arabia in 1977. Hierdie skole is wel ook verbonde aan die doelwitte en doelstellings van inklusiewe opvoeding, soos voorgeskryf deur die Onderwysdepartement, wat streef vir die bevordering van godsdiens en kulturele diversiteit binne 'n demokratiese samelewing. Die meninge en ervarings van nege opvoeders in verband met inklusiwiteit, godsdiens en kulturele verdraagsaamheid en demokratiese burgerskap was ondersoek. Die argument was dat opvoeders en skole verteenwoordig was van die vroegste geleenthede vir leerders om waardevolle verhoudings met positiewe houdings teenoor ander te ontwikkel. Dit stel leerders in staat om waardevol en ingesluit te voel as burgers binne 'n demokratiese en diverse samelewing.

Hierdie kwalitatiewe studie was afgebaken tot een onafhanklike Islamitiese skool in die Weskaap. Die data was ingesamel deur semi-gestruktureerde persoonlike en fokus groep onderhoude en was geanaliseer binne 'n interpretatiewe paradigma.

Die uitkomste was dat deelnemers daarmee saamgestem het dat die skool oop moet wees vir alle leerders ongeag van hul godsdiens. Die meerderheid het wel gevoel dat nie-Moslem leerders aparte onderrig moet ontvang; alhoewel 'n skool 'n omgewing moet bevorder vir verdraagsaamheid en respekvolle houdings teenoor leerders van verskillende kulture en agtergronde. Die deelnemers het 'n skool etos ondersteun wat baseer is op Islamitiese beginsels. Die hoof aanbeveling van hierdie studie is dat onafhanklike Islamitiese skole versigtige oorweging moet gee aan hul rol binne 'n samelewing indien hul 'n demokratiese burgerskap wil skep en godsdiens en kulturele diversiteit wil bevorder.

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXUALIZING THE STUDY

1.1.   INTRODUCTION

The *Education White Paper 6* on *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (2001) should be seen in the context of decades of segregation and systematic under-resourcing. What this document shows is the imbalances when comparing schools that catered for white disabled learners with those that catered for black disabled learners. This document is evidence of the government‟s commitment to eradicate these inequities and ensure that learners, educators and professional support services provide or receive the same levels of service. The *White Paper 6* (2001) defines inclusion as being about recognising and respecting the differences between learners while also building on the similarities that exist. However, inclusive education (Department of Education, 2001) is defined as a pedagogy that acknowledges and respects differences in learners, whether these are due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, or disability. Though this study is about inclusion, it is important to note that religious affiliated schools are by definition, exclusive schools in that they are created with a specific religious population in mind. This research study is positioned within the broad framework of inclusive education in South Africa, though one particular focus, namely religious and cultural diversity within the inclusion debate was investigated.

The *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE, 2003) links religion and education with new initiatives such as the African Renaissance initiative of former president Mbeki, with moral regeneration, and with the promotion of values in South African schools. Religion is described as a significant role-player in instilling in learners an awareness of the need to preserve heritage, respect diversity, and build a future based on progressive values. After the abolition of apartheid in the early 1990s, South Africa‟s democratic government accorded all religions and cultures the same status and respect, and freedom of religion was recognised in the new South African Constitution and in the new curriculum. It is significant that the

nineteen separate education departments that existed in the apartheid era were merged into one education system. The vision was that the new system would serve the needs of all South Africans irrespective of racial, cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds. All this gave inclusion a new and all-encompassing meaning.

Within this new inclusive educational paradigm, there no longer seemed a need for independent religious schools in general, or for independent Muslim schools in particular. Such schools educate learners on the basis of a particular religious value system, and this might work against the goal of a more inclusive education system. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) outline key barriers to education, as identified by The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS). One of these barriers is the existence of discriminatory negative attitudes, based on race, class, gender, culture, language, religion and disability. These attitudes become barriers when they affect learners in the education system. It would seem that the continued existence of independent religious schools might challenge the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994: p. ix) which emphasises the need to provide for an "inclusive society and achieving education for all". However, such schools are provided for in the *South African Schools Act 1996* (Act No. 84 of 1996) and the *National Education Policy Act 1996* (Act No. 27 of 1996). The latter Act states that "everyone has the right, in terms of the Constitution to establish and maintain, at their own expense, an independent educational institution that does not discriminate on the grounds of race, is registered with the state, and maintains standards that are not inferior to standards in comparable public educational institutions. This provision does not preclude state subsidies for such institutions (sections 29(3) and (4))".

As South Africa celebrates its third decade of democracy, it becomes important that there is clarity on the status of independent religious schools and their role in the establishment of a diverse South African school community. If inclusive education is the answer to combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities and building an inclusive society (UNESCO, 1994), this study is important in that it seeks to understand the contribution that independent schools can make to promoting diversity. I argue that school administrators and teachers are strategic role-players in the shaping of active citizens for a democracy. This

study seeks to investigate teachers" understanding and managing of religious and cultural diversity within one independent Islamic school. The context for this study is a particular religious (Islamic) school in the Western Cape province of South Africa.

1.2.   MOTIVATION FOR STUDY

I am a product of an independent religious school. Being an educator and student counsellor at such a school I am motivated to aspire in life and to make a meaningful contribution to the community and society at large. My job as a counsellor at the setting for this study, and my engagement with inclusion as part of my coursework for this master"s degree has initiated my interest in how educators prepare and develop their learners to manage religious and cultural diversity, both within the school community as well as within the broader community and society at large. According to Syed (2001) the purpose of education for a Muslim is to provide economic prosperity of a nation and does not contradict his/her Islamic beliefs. It is only when focusing the goals of education solely for the purpose of money making that it becomes unaccepted. My experience of private independent schooling as both learner and educator has led me to believe that the vision of an independent religious school is to produce true followers of the religion that the school promotes. However, this is in addition to the aim of encouraging the learner to seek further knowledge and develop a career that will not only serve the needs of the Muslim community but also the needs of humanity. The challenge for Muslims in South Africa is to firmly uphold their identity and religious beliefs and practices, but still be seen and recognised as active and meaningful contributors to a country undergoing transformation. According to Fataar (2008, p. 6):

> the Muslim community schools are an example of the multiple ways in which religious communities adapt to the changing discursive environment, of the ways they read contexts strategically, and how they adjust their symbolic and communal repertoires to invent new ways of existing in a changing context. Concerns about morality and quality have been appropriated to provide a rationale for the schools" establishment.

My understanding is that independent Muslim schools seek to produce assertive and true followers of the Islamic faith who are also active citizens within South African society. I am interested in researching how educators at the school in question give meaning to the goal of an inclusive education.

1.3.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Schools created by religious communities are not new developments in South Africa. In the late 1800s it was quite common for black communities to build their own schools as the government did not take responsibility for the education of black children. At that time education was optional for black children. Such community schools reflected the culture, traditions and religious practices of the communities they served. In the same way as Christians established schools along religious lines, Muslims (who were a religious minority) also established their own community schools in an attempt to preserve and uphold their identity, culture, traditions and religious practices. Tayob (2011, p.2) in his article, Islamic Education in South Africa, suggests that:

> Islamic schooling is part of a long process through which Muslim communities provided Islamic and secular education in the country. Although there have been attempts to integrate these streams, the two traditions have been maintained for their separate functions, goals and values. This latest trend of Islamic schooling emphasized the value and importance of secular education. Islamic schools were important for Muslim identity, which in South Africa was informed by race and class.

These schools, which were predominantly primary schools, were in the 1960s co-opted into the public school system. A centralised education department for each of the race groups managed the schools. The single religion-based schools that were subsidised by the government continued to exist, but as public schools they now served learners from other religions as well. In the 1980s independent Muslim schools, especially secondary schools, were being established all over South Africa. Khamissa (2004, p.8) writing about an independent Muslim secondary school, states that "the Muslim School Movement was born

out of a real need – a need to counter the Godless secularist curriculum of most schools."
Khamissa further quotes the Archbishop of Canterbury as saying that the "real problem in
today"s education was the removal of „faith" studies from the curriculum." The motivation
for establishing these schools was that there existed a need to include spiritual values in the
secular curriculum.

According to the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE, 2003) the role of religion
in education flows directly from the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights,
equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief,
and opinion. By enshrining these basic values, the constitution provides the framework for
determining the relationship between religion and education in a democratic society. One
could argue that these independent religious schools serve an exclusive population and could
work against inclusion and diversity. According to a UNESCO document (1994, p. ix),
inclusive education is seen as:

> …the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating
> welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for
> all, moreover providing an effective education to the majority of children and
> improving the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education
> system.

Currently no research exists on the way inclusive education is understood and advanced
within independent Muslim schools in South Africa. This study seeks to understand the
educators" perspectives on how religious and cultural diversity is managed within the
inclusive education paradigm in an independent religious-based school. The research
questions that guides the study is:

1. How do teachers within an independent religious-base school understand inclusion?

2. How do teachers understand tolerance of cultural and religious diversity within their
   school?

3. How do teachers promote cultural and religious diversity, and democratic citizenship?

The context for the study is a school that caters for learners from Grade R to Grade 12. The foundation and elementary phases of the school are co-educational, but the secondary phase of schooling is single sex. The school is divided into a primary school, a girl's high school and a boy's high school. Each school or section has an appointed principal. In order to obtain a balanced view of the school, and advance a rich understanding of this phenomenon, the sample population for the study was representative of all three schools.

1.4.   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Babbie and Mouton (2004) describe the task of qualitative researchers as being to study human action from the insiders' perspective, or the emic perspective. The study undertook a qualitative research design in that it attempted to provide a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationship of the factors that affect human behaviour, as described by Goetz and Le Compte (cited in Anderson (1993)). The aim is to reflect an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and to describe rather than explain or predict human behaviour. Carr and Kemmis (1986) (cited in Merriam, 1998) refer to educational research within an interpretive paradigm as a "process", and to school as a "lived experience". An inductive mode of enquiry is used to understand this process or experience. The individual educators, as participants of the study, construct multiple realities. For this reason a sample of educators at the school was interviewed about their understanding of and management of religious and cultural diversity within the school. The researcher sought to gain insight into how these educators perceived and understood religious and cultural diversity within the inclusive education paradigm and how it was promoted within this independent Islamic school.

According to O'Donoghue (2007) research methodologies can be grouped into four main paradigms. Each paradigm is based upon very different assumptions about how knowledge is generated and accepted as valid for the purposes of research. This study intends to follow the interpretive paradigm which, according to O'Donoghue (2007), emphasises social interaction as the basis for knowledge. Here it is understood that the researcher uses his or her skills as a social being to try to understand how others understand their world. Knowledge in this view

is constructed by mutual negotiation and it is specific to the situation being investigated. The researcher, within this paradigm, attempts to investigate how educators as social beings describe and create meaning in the environment in which they interact with learners.

This study made use of standardised phenomenological interviewing, as described by Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004): information is given and reality is represented through the responses of the interviewee. The content may vary from deep emotions and lived experience to the narratives of an individual or a group, or it may consist of facts and opinions, depending on the type of standardised interview. According to Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004), the phenomenological interview enables the interviewees to articulate their lived experiences or deeply felt emotions.

The aim of the interview was to allow the investigator to enter the other person‟s perspective. An interview guide was prepared to make sure that similar questions were asked of the interviewees. This served as a checklist during the interviewing process, and ensured that all relevant topics were covered. The interview focussed on a particular educator‟s understanding of inclusive education in order to understand how they experienced this at school. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were tape-recorded; these recordings were transcribed verbatim and the text was then analysed. If permission to record an interview was not given, extensive notes were taken (Mouton, 2001). In combination with the guided interview, Patton (1987) suggests that a focus group be established and a focus group interview be conducted towards the end of the data collection stage, when all the participants have been interviewed. The rationale is to establish and examine opinions and attitudes as expressed through group consensus or disagreement, and this can help to validate the results of the individual interviews. In addition to clarifying arguments and uncovering diversity within the group, the group interview provides insight into the meanings created by the group (Denzin, 1998). As an integrated part of data collection, policy documents of the school were collected and studied as a way of validating or checking the outcome of the interviews and focus group interactions. These documents served as secondary data sources in relation to the data that was obtained through interviews and relayed through transcripts. Finally, data from all the sources used during the research process was integrated and pulled together (Mouton, 2001).

1.5.   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As ethical issues in social research are important (but often not clearly defined), most professional associations have published formal codes of conduct describing what   is considered acceptable and unacceptable professional conduct (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). Appropriate permission was gained from the host institution prior to conducting the research. (See Appendix A) I was required to provide accurate information about the research proposal to the host institution, and I endeavoured to conduct the research in accordance with approved research protocols.

Ethical conduct is about making sure that no harm is caused to those who agree to participate in the study. During the research process the researcher took the utmost caution to adhere to these ethical considerations. Firstly, the participants gave their informed consent. This meant that all participants were fully informed about the research, and the aim of the interview. (See Appendix B) They were assured of the confidentiality of the information shared, and that the tape recordings were stored in a secure place to which only the researcher had access. They were further assured that after all information had been transcribed, and the transcripts verified by the participants, the recordings would be destroyed. Both the school and the participants had to give written consent to allow access to the institution and its staff members. (Henning, Rensburg and Smit; 2004)

As this is an independent school, the process of gaining permission differed from that which applies to Western Cape Education Department (WCED) schools. Only after the institution had granted written permission for the research to be conducted at their site, did the researcher approach prospective participants and establish their willingness to be interviewed. They were assured of the confidentiality of the process, and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant as a way of protecting his or her identity, as well as to avoid possible victimisation from administrators. The information gathered during the interviewing process was tape-recorded to facilitate the transcribing of the interviews. The transcriptions were stored in a secure place and the tapes were destroyed after the research had been completed.

It was also important that language that would be understood by all participants was used to obtain their informed consent, and that this was appropriately documented. Whilst obtaining informed consent, the researcher informed the participants of the nature of the research project. As this study sought to gain an understanding of the participants" experience of inclusive education within the setting of this particular school, participants were assured there would be no repercussions if they refused. All participants gave informed and voluntary consent. However, Babbie and Mouton (2004), state that one should be cautious about voluntary participation: the researcher should be especially sensitive to any implied sanctions that might apply to the participant, and make special provisions to obviate these. The research was completed over a period of two months.

1.6. CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Inclusion

Inclusion refers to the development of every learner"s competence to participate in a diverse and increasingly interdependent society. This implies more than mere physical presence. A community member should participate in social activities, make valued contributions and receive the necessary support from the community (Hammil, 2002).

Inclusive Education:

Inclusive Education is defined as a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language. (NCSNET/ NCESS, 1998)

Independent Schools

These are schools that are managed and funded by the community or a by a specific group of individuals. Though these schools may receive some governmental financial aid, they depend

largely on the financial support generated from school fees, from fund raising and from contributions from businesses or individuals.

Religious-based schools

These are schools that have their own vision and mission, and strive to deliver quality education with a specific religious orientation in mind. Although some of these schools follow the National Education Curriculum, they adhere to a strict code of practice based on their specific religious orientation.

Tolerance:

The learning environments created by schools should accept, respect and support learners from other religious denominations within a specific schooling context. Learners from other religious denominations should be respected for the diversity they bring to the school, and their beliefs should be respected.

1.7.   STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY – AN OVERVIEW

In Chapter One I have provided a background for the study. I argue for the importance of research on inclusive education, as this is defined within a particular religious independent school in South Africa. The chapter also discusses the need for the establishment of religious based schools within a culturally and religiously diverse community and country.

Chapter Two provides the literature review. It reviews the development of inclusive education in South Africa. This required an understanding of the development of inclusive education and its implications in the multi-cultural and diverse South African educational context. Of importance to this study was the educators" own understanding of inclusive education and how this could be promoted within their context of this particular school.

Chapter Three outlines the design and the research methodology used in this study. It provides reasons for the adoption of a qualitative research approach. It also discusses the techniques and processes utilised in the gathering of data. It also elaborates on some of the ethical issues relevant to the data collection process.

Chapter Four analyses the data and links it with the literature review in Chapter Two. In Chapter Four the data that was collected is presented for analysis. This chapter provides a detailed description of how the data was processed, reduced and coded. The data is presented in thematic format, and discussed.

Finally, Chapter Five presents the findings of the study. In this chapter I summarise the aims and approach of the study, draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Scientific research is the collective effort of many researchers who share their results with one another in pursuit of new knowledge. According to Neuman (2000) one of the important goals of the literature review is to show the path of prior research and how a current project contributes to existing knowledge. This chapter will place the literature that is reviewed in context of this study of independent religious-based schools and explore its relevance to the debate regarding inclusive education in the South African context. It is assumed that knowledge accumulates and that we learn from and builds on what others have done (Neuman: 2000).

Through the literature review, I could not locate South African research that had been undertaken into the way inclusive education has been understood and advanced by independent religious-based schools. The literature did, however, provide definitions of what is meant by inclusion, and what the practices and processes of inclusive education entail. This helped to guide my approach to this topic.

The concept of inclusive education has been challenged by Thomas and Glenny (2009) who argue that though inclusive education is prompted by the kindest of motives, it is often justified on ideological grounds rather than by rational enquiry. According to Wilson (2000) it is the human tendency to be kind and fair that leads to the adoption of inclusive education. However, it is argued that kind sentiments and high ideals are not a satisfactory basis for large-scale changes in educational policy: on the one hand these sentiments are not clearly defined, and on the other hand, the available evidence does not justify large-scale attempts to realise these aims.

According to Swart (2004), however, inclusive education is the practice and process of meeting the diverse needs of all learners – regardless of age, ability, socio-economic background, talent, gender, language, HIV status and cultural origin – by providing supportive classroom and school environments. It reflects a deep commitment to an education system that values and respects diversity. In order to accommodate diversity, the education system attempts to make a common curriculum accessible to all learners. The goal of inclusive education is to provide school children with the opportunity to learn to live in a diverse, democratic society. This is seen as a positive force in bringing about participatory responses to diversity and achieving equity (Dyson & Millward, 2000). The emphasis is on the system meeting the needs of the child as far as possible – rather than the child being separated, excluded, or in any way discriminated against to suit the needs of the system (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002).

The challenge is to see how an inclusive education philosophy could be applied by independent religious schools. Such schools are usually created on a homogeneous school culture that is based on a specific religion, ethnicity, or even race. The question that arises is how the practices and processes of inclusive education would unfold in such systems. In this study, undertaken at a school defined by its religious homogeneity, I seek to explore the extent to which educators" understanding of their role was influenced by an inclusive paradigm, and to examine their attempts to promote religious tolerance in an increasingly diverse, democratic society. The independent Islamic school that was the context of the study was established in the early 1980s to cater to the educational needs of Muslim learners in the city of Cape Town.

In this chapter, I will review the literature on inclusion and inclusive education. I will also provide an overview of the historical context within which independent Islamic schools have developed in South Africa and review the documentation that advances an understanding of diversity and inclusivity and its promotion and development within such schools.

2.2.   HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MUSLIM SCHOOLING

An understanding of inclusive education within independent Islamic schools requires some knowledge of the philosophy guiding the establishment of schools that cater for Muslims as a religious group. According to Fataar (2005) the phenomenon of Muslim schools in South Africa should to be understood in the political and historical context of separate development. Muslim schools are to be understood to part of the efforts of "black oppressed people" to resist their oppression under apartheid. Muslim communities formed a distinctive part of the political landscape. Their public and educational institutions helped establish their place in this unfolding landscape. The phenomenon of Muslim schools in South Africa should thus be understood as part of the ongoing adaptation of oppressed communities to an ever-changing terrain. A distinction needs to also be made between religiously affiliated and non-affiliated Muslim schools. In this study, the independent Islamic school in question is a religiously affiliated school that follows a secular curriculum where Islamic studies as a subject provides the moral and religious values that are the basis for the school"s existence.

According to Goodson (1994) the school curriculum is a social artifact, conceived and constructed for deliberate human purposes. It is therefore a supreme paradox that in many accounts of schooling the curriculum, this most manifest of social constructions, is treated as a "given". Zuhdi (2006) shows that for a great number of Indonesian people, religion is an important aspect of their lives, especially when it comes to facing the issues of globalisation and secularisation. (This is discussed more fully later, in the section on Policy on Religion and Education). This is reflected not only by legislative changes in Indonesia, but also by the changing educational trends. For Indonesian Muslims, as for others, formal education is the best way to provide future generations with the knowledge and skills needed in their future lives. Moreover, many Indonesian Muslims seem to agree that in addition to knowledge and skills, religious instruction is an important aspect of education. Given that religion is an important aspect of their lives, they believe that religious education will provide young people with the values and beliefs that will help them cope in an increasingly globalised and secularised world.

South Africans live in an increasingly diverse society, and educators and schools are faced with the challenge of enabling young people to feel valued and included as citizens of this society. As schools and educators grasp the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with (and positive perceptions of) all sections of society, schools and educators often have to confront the concepts of "otherness"" and "difference". Schools are in a real need of guidance and support as their learners seek to make sense of the world and realize their future goals. The *Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE: 2003) is still in its draft phase. Not many schools are aware of the policy or are trying to implement it. Consequently it is not surprising that classroom praxis shows little attempt to implement the policy recommendations. Jarvis (2008) argues that this could be because schools and educators do not necessarily understand that South African citizens have a constitutional and human right to religious freedom – hence their resistance to an approach to education that recognises a plurality of religions.

In 2003 the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal in his "Minister"s Forward to the Policy on Religion and Education" (DoE, 2003: pp. 2), stated the following:

> …as a democratic society with a diverse population of different cultures, languages and religions we are duty-bound to ensure that through our diversity we develop a unity of purpose and spirit that recognises and celebrates our diversity. This should be particularly evident in our public schools where no particular religious ethos should be dominant over and suppress others. Just as we must ensure and protect the equal rights of all students to be at school, we must also appreciate their right to have their religious views recognised and respected.

In an attempt to clarify the relationship between religion and education, the Draft Policy on Religion and Education (DoE, 2003) presents four possible models for structuring the relationship between religion and the state. (i) The first is the theocratic model, which identifies the state with one particular religion or religious grouping. In some cases, this model has resulted in a situation in which the state and religion become indistinguishable. In a religiously diverse society such as South Africa, this model is inappropriate.

(ii) A second model is the repressionist model, which is based on the premise that the state should act to suppress all religions. In such a model, the state would marginalise or eliminate religion in public life. In a religiously active society such as South Africa, any constitutional model based on the hostility of the state towards religion would be unthinkable. The current South African state rejects both the theocratic model of the religious state (such as the „Christian National‟ state that in South Africa‟s recent history tried to impose religion in public institutions) as well as the repressionist model that would mean the adoption of a hostile stance towards religion.

(iii) A modern secular state, which is neither religious nor anti-religious, in principle adopts a position of impartiality towards all religions and worldviews. A separatist model attempts to completely divorce the religious and secular spheres of a society, such as is the case in France or the United States. In practice it is difficult to achieve a complete separation between these two spheres, since there is considerable interplay between religion and public life. Furthermore, it can be argued that a strict separation is not desirable, since the commitment and engagement of religious bodies makes an important contribution to the quality of life of a country‟s people.

 (iv) In the fourth model, which is a cooperative model, both the principle of legal separation and the possibility of creative interaction are affirmed. Separate spheres for religion and the state are established by the Constitution, but there is scope for interaction between the two. While ensuring the protection of citizens from religious discrimination or coercion, this model encourages ongoing dialogue between religious groups and the state in areas of common interest and concern. In such exchanges, however, religious individuals and groups must be assured of freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion.

The *Draft Policy Document on Religion and Education* (2003), states that, under the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, the state assumes a position of fairness, informed by a parity of esteem for all religions and worldviews. This positive impartiality may include a profound appreciation of spirituality and religion in its many manifestations, as reflected by the deference to God in the preamble to South Africa‟s constitution, but it does not impose this. (DoE, 2003) Though the policy is binding on state schools, the independent religious-based schools are not legally bound by this policy as they are independent of the public school system. This leeway has implications for the development of inclusive citizenship and tolerance towards diversity within a democratic society in such schools.

According to the headmaster of a leading independent Anglican boys" college, situated in the southern suburbs of Cape Town, the school believes that their pupils are unrestricted in many areas of school life, and they are encouraged to aspire to excellence in all they do. They follow South Africa"s national curriculum programme, and support the educational aspirations of the nation. I argue that this Anglican school to some extent adopted the *Draft Policy Document on Religion and Education* (2003), and made meaning of it within their curriculum.   The school has based its spirituality statement on the premise that their learners

- cherish God"s creation, seeing it as an integrated and indivisible whole; and in a dangerously polluted world honour God by joining with all who seek sustainable policies for the environment.

- know, worship and love God, who is the foundation of our lives;

- live a life of humble service;

- understand and acknowledge that we share a common humanity with all people and that every human being is unique and infinitely precious;

- respect every person, whatever their social status, race, religion, gender, sexuality or anything else that distinguishes them, and treat them with genuine and compassionate concern;

- are committed to joining with all who struggle for human rights, freedom and dignity, justice and peace, whatever the cost;

- cherish God"s creation, seeing it as an integrated and indivisible whole; and in a dangerously polluted world honour God by joining with all who seek sustainable policies for the environment.

The vision and mission statement of this independent Anglican religious-based school provides further motivation for this enquiry into the role of Islamic independent schools in the promotion of freedom and dignity, justice and peace and the struggle for human rights in the South African context. These schools are situated in close proximity to each other and

both follow the national curriculum. These similarities could be explored in an attempt to understand the promotion of inclusive education by the independent religious-based schools.

Muslims across the globe have become disillusioned with the public school system''s ability to deliver the best education for their children. Two main reasons for this disillusionment and lack of trust were that parents'' feeling that their children were suffering scholastically and that their Islamic identity was threatened. According to Syed cited in Bint Marx (2007, pp.45):

> …the aim of education should be in that it caters for the balanced growth of the total personality of man through training of the human spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and senses. This training imparted to a Muslim must be such that faith is infused into the whole of his/her personality and creates in him/her emotional attachment to Islam, enabling him to follow the *Quran* and *Sunnah* (example of the Prophet p.b.u.h.). Man should be governed by an Islamic system of values willingly and joyfully so that he or she may proceed to the realization of his/her status as *Khalifatullah* (vicegerent).

The aims and objectives of Islamic education were defined in the Recommendation of the Committee of the First World Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah, Saudi Arabia in 1977 (Husain & Ashraf: 1979). However, if religion is part of the holistic educational development of the individual, how does inclusive education accord with these aims and objectives?

Swart (2004) defines inclusive education as the practice and process of meeting the diverse needs of all learners – regardless of age, ability, socio-economic background, talent, gender, language, HIV status and cultural origin – in supportive classrooms and schools. This reflects a deep commitment to create an education system that values and respects diversity and supports all learners, educators and school communities to maximise participation and the development of their full potential. In order to accommodate diversity, the education system is expected to transform and develop ways of making a common curriculum accessible to all learners. The goal of inclusive education is to provide children with the opportunity to learn

to live in a diverse, democratic society. It is described by Dyson and Millward (2000) as a positive force in bringing about participatory responses to diversity and promoting equity.

According to the South African *White Paper No. 6* (DoE, 1996), inclusive education is about acknowledging the potential of children and young people to learn, and their need for support. Inclusive education is about enabling educational structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners. For this reason the South African *White Paper No. 6* (DoE, 1996) accepts and respects the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which should be equally valued and are an ordinary part of human experience. The proponents of inclusive education highlight its potential to empower learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning. However, for this to happen educators, parents, the community and the society as a whole need to change their attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the learning environment to meet the needs of all learners (DoE, 1996).

As South Africa celebrates its freedom and democracy and strives to meet the needs of all its citizens, one of the main advantages of inclusivity in the education system is that it promotes respect and tolerance of others. Respect and tolerance of others must be achieved within the classroom, where educators strive to meet the needs of all their learners. Respect and tolerance towards others include showing complete acceptance and recognition of those who have different religious persuasions, cultures and beliefs. Embracing difference is what underpins our constitution and democracy; for this to happen the education system needs to create a supportive environment in which every individual is respected and tolerated.

2.3.   INCLUSION AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

South Africans live in an increasingly diverse society. Educators and schools are at the forefront of the challenge of enabling all young people to feel valued and included as citizens. Schools often represent the earliest opportunity for learners to develop meaningful relationships with, and positive perceptions of, people from other sections of society (Madden, 2003). For schools to take up this challenge, they need an understanding of how they would go about this and how the principles of inclusive education would promote

participatory involvement by educators and schools. According to Hammil (2002) inclusion requires the development of every learner‟s competence to participate in a diverse and increasingly interdependent society. This implies more than just the mere physical presence of an individual. As a community member, he/she ought to participate actively. In this way he/she can make valued contributions and receive the necessary support from the community. For learners to develop and attain his or her optimal level of growth within the classroom and the school as a whole, it is imperative that they should feel that their view points and values are respected. In addition to respecting and valuing their learners, educators also have the responsibility to guide and support them.

Sayed, Soudien and Carrim (2003) argue that educational inclusion requires careful consideration of every aspect of schooling, and especially of the social context of the learners. They propose that an interlocking framework approach be considered whereby race, gender, class, religion, language, etc. intersect in ways that recognise people‟s uniqueness and their particular experiences. This interlocking framework recognises the complex ways in which race, class, gender, and other categories intersect and interrelate to produce unique individual and group experiences. Sayed et al (2003) point out that applying a rational interlocking framework means paying attention to the points of institutional access, the institutional setting and ethos, the curriculum and the social location of institutions. Educational inclusion thus presumes a broad-based collective will to effect transformation at every level of society.

Delprit (2009) describes how the "culture of power" within the classroom becomes important when discussing classroom dynamics, especially the relationships that exists between and among educators and learners. Delprit (2009) argues that issues of power are enacted in classrooms. This includes the power of the teacher over the students, the power of the publishers of textbooks, and the power of the developer of the curriculum to determine the way in which the world is presented. According to Delprit, those with power are frequently the least willing to acknowledge its existence. This acknowledgement is, however, important if tolerance towards others with different religious and cultural viewpoints is to be fostered.

Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenberg (2009) agree with many experts that inclusive education should focus on the transformation of educational systems. This ambitious project is based on the ideals of social justice. It is argued that learners with special educational needs were

historically excluded from the opportunity to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers, were denied access to the general education curriculum, and were educated in programs with little accountability. It can be argued that within an inclusive educational framework, learners from diverse religious backgrounds should be granted similar opportunities to be educated alongside their non-affiliated peers. According to Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenberg (2009) inclusive education is a means of providing social justice for learners with disabilities and with different religious backgrounds. The rights and ethics discourse of inclusivity calls attention to the role played by schools in (re)producing inequalities, particularly when it comes to marginalised students (Dyson, 1999). Although schools are expected to enhance life opportunities and contribute to the creation of a more equitable society, the rights and ethics discourse proponents argue that schools in fact maintain societal inequalities.

A further justification for inclusive education comes from the efficacy discourse outlined by Dyson (1999). This critiques segregated models on the ground of the failure of special education to promote students‟ learning. I would argue that religious schools may also fail to promote the inclusive ideal of tolerance of diversity. If effectively implemented, inclusion can enhance a student‟s sense of belonging by enabling participation in contexts in which various types of difference are accepted, and a community approach towards learning is adopted (Johnson, 2004).

Moloi (2005) makes reference to the famous "I have a dream" speech of Martin Luther King, Jr., whose vision changed a nation. For Moloi (2005) it is shared vision that brings about change, and an all-encompassing worldview helps an individual to focus on what he or she knows, has to learn and should value. These shared values are what schools should promote in order to achieve tolerance and respect for others within a diverse society. In inclusive education the emphasis falls on the system meeting the needs of the child as much as possible – rather than the child being separated, excluded, or in any other way discriminated against to suit the needs of the system (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2004). This implies that learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds should be respected and tolerated within an increasingly diverse society. Independent religious-based schools should not only allow access to learners from diverse backgrounds but should embrace these learners on account of the diversity they bring to these schools. Learners and educators are members who live in a

diverse community, in which different religions and cultures exist. For society to respect all learners, it is important to look at the context in which the learner finds him or herself.

2.4.   CONCEPTUALISING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR INCLUSION

The eco-systemic perspective attempts to integrate both the environmental and systemic theoretical approach. Different elements of the system in the social environment are seen to influence, and be influenced by, one another in a continuous process of dynamic balance, tension, and interplay. Systems and subsystems interact with other systems above, below, or alongside them. In addition, each level of a system has its own subsystem, which functions in particular ways (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2004).

The environment has a significant impact in the way we learn and interact with the current systems. A child does not function in isolation: she or he is a product of what happens in the family, the community and in the broader society. This is best described from an eco-systemic perspective (Engelbrecht, 1999). This consists of three systems: (i) a micro-system which comprises of the child‟s family; the child‟s peers; and the school community. She or he interacts with these various levels within the system. The child‟s development would negatively be affected should there be malfunctioning at any part or level of this system. The interaction of the child within the various environmental contexts is where the hype of developmental activities takes place, as the individual takes on various roles within the system and interacts at different levels. The (ii) meso-system, which comprises the local community, is a combination of all the relevant systems within the micro-system, whereas the (iii) exo-system concentrates on the impact the broader community and service delivery will have on the individual. Within the exo-system the focus is on the welfare services, other parents, neighbours, family friends, the education system and local health care. The whole social system is incorporated in the macro-system, which refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies of a particular society or culture. To gain an understanding of the educational development of a learner, it is imperative to view the learner in the context of these systems. Consideration should be given to the operational mechanisms that allow for the functioning of the individual and for collaboration with all stakeholders to bring about meaningful change.

According to Engebrecht (1999) the transition from segregated schools towards respect and tolerance for religious and cultural diversity within schools affects not only certain subsystems in the school, but also the whole school system, and the specific community which it serves. Engebrecht cautions that the values, opinions, attitudes and concerns of educators, learners, administrators and parents are deeply embedded in the systemic structure of schools in relation to communities. When dealing with or promoting change in the school system, the different worldviews that are present in the school should be taken into consideration. To accomplish systemic change, a way has to be found of addressing both the practical and the personal components of change.

The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) proclaims that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving equity in education. Moreover, inclusive schools provide an effective education for the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

When exploring the eco-systems approach, it was observed how the previous separatist education system under the National Party disadvantaged the learner with special educational needs and failed to see the learner as part of a broader system that influences his or her development. In an attempt to understand the need for inclusive education, it is important to examine the historical context of the education system as it evolved over the years. The apartheid education system under the National Party did not make it possible for all South African learners to develop to their full potential. According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) the government instituted separate education for the different racial groups and segregated all educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities) along racial lines. This system led to the entrenching of discriminatory practices.

Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) report that most black and coloured learners (66%) who were enrolled at elementary level and grade 1, have been over enrolled by 45% with under-age learners. This resulted in a dropout rate of 16% per annum at this level. They go further and argue that no consideration was given to establishing the readiness and ability of learners to deal with schooling. This result in a 16% per annum increase of illiteracy and produced poorly educated adults. Only 5% of learners who entered secondary school were literate and

this contributed to the high failure rate. The system frustrated learners and led to many learners eventually dropping out. These problems were aggravated by large class sizes with vast discrepancies in teacher: pupil ratios. In white schools, the ratio was 1:18, while in black schools it was between 1: 40 and 1: 60.

The focus was on segregation and exclusion, whereas in the systems approach the focus is on integration and inclusion. Dyson and Forlin (1999) argue that it is not insignificant that South Africa, from an international perspective on inclusion, has opted for a broader definition of inclusion which extends far beyond the issue of providing for learners with disabilities. According to Hammil (2002) inclusion necessitates the development of every learner's competence to participate in a diverse and increasingly interdependent society.   Inclusive education in the South African post-apartheid context, according to Dyson and Forlin (1999) includes all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture or sexual preference. Within the eco-systemic approach, the focus is on changing the system and developing different systems to support the child. Emphasis is placed on collaboration between role-players, including between specialist personnel. In the context of this study, it reiterates the importance of respect and tolerance towards others.

2.5.   EDUCATION AS A HUMAN RIGHT

Abberley (2009) argues the position of disabled people from the perspective of oppression within schools. He suggests that disabled people can be regarded as a group whose members are in an inferior position to other members of society because they are disabled. He further argues that these disadvantages are dialectically related to an ideology or cluster of ideologies which justify and perpetuate this situation. However Abberley (2009) does acknowledge that a crucial feature of oppression and the way it operates is its specificity of form, content and location. Though this argument is made in relation to people with disabilities, I believe it also applies to other marginalised groups, such as those who are excluded on the grounds of class, race or religion.   If one follows Abberley's argument, within the independent Islamic schooling system non-Islamic learners may be disadvantaged in relation to their Muslim peers. This may further be exacerbated by fellow learners and educators who may try to justify and preserve their privileged situation.

Section 3 of the South African Bill of Rights protects the rights of those who may be oppressed. It is, for example, unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of religion, conscience or belief. It can be argued that any learner who is accepted at an independent religious-based school has the right to be not only tolerated but also to be respected for his/her religious beliefs. Abberley‟s (2009) concept of oppression was relevant to this study, which focuses on the way learners of other religious faiths are accommodated in independent religious-based schools.

One of the aims of an inclusive education system is to combat discriminatory practices within schools, the community and society. Poplin (1988) suggests that the task of school is to help the student to develop new meanings in response to new experiences rather than to learn the meanings others have created previously. South Africa adopted a democratic Constitution and Bill of Rights in 1995, which defined the inalienable right of all South Africans to be accommodated in democratically responsive institutions, in a society with considerable economic, racial and cultural diversity.

In an attempt to redress the injustices of the previous education system, the Bill of Rights in South Africa‟s Constitution states that "all learners have a right to basic education, including adult education and further education" (*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. p. 29). The *South African Schools Act* (DoE, 1996) legislates in accordance with the Bill of Rights for the compulsory education of learners from the ages of seven years until 15 years, or until the ninth grade, whichever comes first. Thus, the rights of all children, including those with special needs are now protected. This study views education as a human right which serves as a vehicle for social justice.

As previously stated, Lipsky and Gartner (1996) (in Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenburg (2009)) maintain that inclusive education should focus on the transformation of the educational system and the realisation of the ideals of social justice. However Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenburg (2009) suggest that the advent of market-driven perspectives is strengthening a version of individualistic social justice that further disadvantages certain communities in society. If one applies their definition, then the independent Islamic school‟s position within communities could be viewed as "individualistic" in that it propagates an individual faith and is not seen as a school providing education for a broader society. It is to be expected that, within a faith-based school, inclusive practices may look different than in

state schools. Faith-based schools should also provide the frame of reference for an educational philosophy supportive of democracy. Prof. Kader Asmal, a former Minister of Education, states in his introduction to the *White Paper 6*, *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, (DoE, 2001. p.4) that, "What will be required of us all are persistence, commitment, cooperation, support, evaluation, follow-up and leadership". These strong, encouraging words surely convey a deeper understanding. This is that the previous system was responsible for many great injustices and failed the majority of the population. His words to South Africans, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion and culture, are to be committed, cooperative and supportive of the values and principles of inclusive education in order to encourage democratic citizenship and tolerance of others. Booth (2009) reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury called for schools to be inclusive of learners of other faiths (or of those of no faith), arguing that while no school is truly inclusive at the point of entry, schools should be inclusive in the wider and wiser sense of educating people for active participation in an inclusive society.

Lazarus et al. (1999) (in Swart and Pettipher, 2005) describe an inclusive education system as one that:

- expresses a commitment to nurturing a genuine respect for all people
- combats prejudice and discriminatory practices
- utilises human resources for the mutual benefit of all
- acknowledges the rights of all learners to access equitable educational opportunities
- develops a flexible curriculum that addresses the diverse needs of all learners.

If learning is strategic, and takes into account the context in which the learner finds him- or herself, then we need to look at learning from a holistic viewpoint. Poplin (1988) suggests that the task of schools is to help the student to develop new meanings in response to new experiences rather than to learn the meanings others have previously created. With regard to both the Muslim as well as the non-Muslim learner in a diverse learning environment (classroom or school), it is the individual learner's unique experience that should be considered and respected. Educators within these diverse religious and cultural settings must view learning from the perspective of the student rather than through preferred methodologies, mandated curricula and student assessments and diagnoses. Take for example the analogy of a puzzle. As one adds the pieces that complete a puzzle, one sees the

development of a picture. The pieces have to fit in at specific places to make meaning of and develop the picture. In addition, every time one looks at the picture, one tends to focus on different aspects of the developing picture and appreciate its beauty and uniqueness. One person might see the formation of one form and the next person will see a different form within the same configuration. The task of the educator is to facilitate the learning process and respect the diversity within the classroom.

The *White Paper 6* (DoE, 2001) grounds the central objective of the policy of inclusivity in all bands of education and training within the South African education and training system. This is necessary if the range of learning needs is to be recognised and accommodated. This emphasises that the previous separatist system failed to recognise the uniqueness of the individual and his or her specific needs; it failed to acknowledge diversity. Within independent religious schools there is a definite privileging of a particular religious faith and culture; for this reason it is important for citizens of a multi-cultural and diverse society to understand inclusive education as a vehicle for building a nation which respects religious and cultural tolerance and embraces diversity at all levels.

2.6.   COLLABORATION

Building an inclusive society cannot be achieved by members, systems or institutions working in isolation. The eco-systemic approach to the ideals, values and principles of inclusive education views transformation within society as a collective effort on the part of all its members. Collaboration means joint planning, decision-making and problem-solving directed towards a common goal (which could be formal or informal) (Stanovich, 1996). Schaffer and Bryant (in Idol and West, 1991) explain collaboration as shared decision-making in the governance, planning, delivery and evaluation of education. It is a pluralistic approach to education where people of dissimilar backgrounds work together on the basis of equality. The question is how do the independent Islamic schools view inclusion and inclusive practices? Do they see this as a way of transforming society by building a more democratic and tolerant society?

Hall, Campher, Smit, Oswald & Engelbrecht (1999) (in Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht, 1999) describes collaboration as a dynamic and an on-going process, which is not an end in itself, but the product of a process of interaction between individuals working towards a common outcome. The equal involvement of other parties does not imply that the individuals who cooperate hold the same sets of experiences, knowledge or skills; it means that they bring their own unique perspectives, experiences, knowledge bases and personal belief systems to the process, and that these hold equal weight and value.

2.7.   WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Whole school development means involving all aspects of the school as an organisation. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) describe organisations as complex systems that make up the whole; all elements need to function well if the organisation as a whole is to be effective in achieving its goal. Although schools may have different make-ups, they function in similar ways. A school, as an organisation, is in a continuous interaction with other systems outside the school – including the broader community, and the social system as a whole. When discussing inclusion and diversity, one has to engage with various aspects of faith-based schools and with the issue of faith within schools in relation to the broader community.

A number of factors should be considered when developing the independent Islamic schools as inclusive schools. A school has a particular culture, identity and strategy. Within the independent Islamic schools, culture refers to the atmosphere or ethos of the school, including the values and norms that are reflected in the patterns of interaction in the school. The identity of the school is closely related to its culture, and has to do with the vision, values and beliefs of the school. In strategising the way forward, the school will examine various ways of fulfilling its mission and goals. This illustrates how the different systems in the school function as an organisation, how the school can access systems and available resources to improve its identity and create a culture of development and nurturing. The management and teaching staff can strategise as how best to serve the needs of the learners and make the best possible use of the available resources.

Swart and Pettipher (2001), in describing the changing of roles of principals and educators, state that educators play a pivotal role in developing an inclusive learning environment as

they are the ones who relate directly to learners on a daily basis. Within the collaborative process, the educator has the very important role of promoting a school-wide culture that welcomes, appreciates and accommodates diversity so that every learner feels safe, connected and cared for.

2.8.   EDUCATORS AS STRATEGIC ROLE-PLAYERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION

Swart and Pettipher (2001) suggest that the inclusion of learners is an important issue that relates to educators" beliefs, values and attitudes. This study examines the educators" understanding of inclusive education within an independent Islamic school, with special reference to how educators promote inclusion and respect for other religions and for cultural diversity. Educators need to think carefully about how they verbalise their assumptions about learners, about differences and about learning. According to Husain and Ashraf (1979, p.104) an educator within the Islamic school

> …is more than a mere functionary. He or she [is] a model to be emulated. He or she [is] expected to treat his charges (learners) not as many sheep or cattle which need to be disciplined, but as impressionable human beings whose characters need to be moulded and who are to be initiated by him into the moral code which society cherished.

Husain and Ashraf (1979) refer to educators as role-models for their learners in that they are able to promote and share the moral attitudes of respect and tolerance towards others. Educators ought to develop their learners into moral beings who share the common values of society, in that they promote mutual respect and tolerance and uphold the dignity of all human beings. They state that Muslim educators should be able to bring about an awakening within the Muslim society. They should find ways in which both Islamic and Western education systems can benefit from the inspiration of religion as well as from the guidance of science.

 Swart and Pettipher (2001) argue the need for educators to actively participate and contribute to shaping a vision and mission that reflects the values and characteristics of an inclusive learning environment. The independent Islamic schools need to create safe, professional

environments, where educators" attitudes and beliefs with regard to inclusion can be explored, shared, challenged, restructured and rethought. Thoughts become concrete when they are shared. Taking account to these ideas within a collaborative environment provides an opportunity for the educator to reconsider and reflect on personal ideas and beliefs in a more creative way.

2.9.   THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

According to Swart and Pettipher (2001), for an education system to be inclusive it should be capable of meeting the diverse needs of learners as effectively as possible within the school environment. They quote the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, as stating that the ultimate challenge is to "create the conditions of learning and teaching in all South African learning institutions so that all learners can be fully accommodated, can flourish and contribute effectively to the regeneration of our society, our economy and out country" (DoE, 1999, p. ii).

The challenge for the independent Islamic school is to create a learning environment that caters for a diverse learner population within the school and helps to create the conditions described by Professor Asmal. Waghid (2011, pp. 41) makes reference to Griffith ideas (1965) when he states

> we cannot think whatever we like, and we cannot do whatever we like, and in consequence these are limits on what institutions are possible, and surprises about what institutions become actual. The limits of possibility are set by the (cultural and not merely logical) limits of thought, and by the (physical, cultural, social, economic, etc.) limits of practice.

Syed (2003) argues that the aim of an Islamic education is to cater for the balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of the human spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and senses so that faith is infused into the whole personality of man and creates in him/her an emotional attachment to Islam. Bint Erik Marx (2007) discusses the social context of the learning environment. She suggests that home-schooling is the best way

forward for the Muslim child as it protects him or her against "the many *fitnah* (trials/challenges) that can happen to them" within the public school sector. I argue that the analogy of the homogeneous learning environment of independent Islamic schools can be seen as the "home" for the Muslim learner. He gives the following reasons:

1. The child is comfortable at home (Muslim school), feels he or she can be him- or herself without ridicule, and relax.

2. The child feels safe and so the brain is open to new ideas and challenges instead of being self-defensive.

3. The child feels the love from the parents (who are the educators) when they are teaching him something; he is sure they are teaching him because they care for his well-being.

What kind of socialization does Bint Erik Marx propose for the Muslim learner who is nurtured entirely within the perimeters of the home (Islamic school) without any outside or diverse influences? The South African context is different as Muslims have always been part of a culturally diverse black community. According to Niehaus (2006) in the early 1980s in South Africa the resistance to the apartheid-regime grew rapidly and embraced almost all social groups which were oppressed. This development led to an increasing political mobilisation and involvement of Muslims who until then had shown little interest in political participation as long as they could exercise their religious duties freely. It is important to understand the position of an Islamic school in the context of the search for quality education in a system that offers both a sense of being part of the broader society and also equips learners with appropriate socialising skills that extend beyond the perimeters of the independent Islamic school.

Learning and the process of seeking information and knowledge are important in order for learners to develop to their true potential. Jordaan and Jordaan (1998) outline five principles which may be fundamental to the process of learning:

- Leaning occurs naturally
- Learning processes change as a result of development
- Individuals have different approaches to learning
- Expressions of learning differ
- Learning is strategic.

When learning occurs naturally, it is implied that learning is instinctive. Your natural response to something that has happened to you will show what you have learnt from this experience (you will have learnt something). For example, a baby who is hungry expresses his or her need to her mother by crying. This is not taught or coached by any parent or adult; it is a natural response and it elicits the appropriate reaction from the parent. Both parent and child have learnt that crying has meaning. For the child it is an indication of hunger: if the crying continues the caregiver will understand that the child is hungry and needs feeding.

It is important to understand how an individual constructs meaning in the learning process and interacts with the environment (i.e. with various levels of the eco-system) to develop further and become an active participant within the learning process. The relevance of the learning environment can be seen in the interactions and interventions of educators within independent Islamic schools: they must respond to the needs of learners at the appropriate developmental level in order to foster their spiritual and academic development. In a *Hadith* (teaching of the Prophet p.b.u.h.), he reiterates the Concrete Operational Stage of Piaget when he gives guidance on teaching a child to perform his or her prayers at the age of seven, and on the encouragement that must be given at the age of ten. According to Pnevmatikos (2002, p. 107) the Piagetian model constructs a developmental linearity that involves qualitative change: it does not require a new belief to be added to an old one, but rather "the replacement of the entire conceptual system". The learner is able to construct his or her own understanding of religion and culture; if this is implanted at the concrete operational level the learner can only develop into a stronger tree at the formal operational level. This once again

emphasises the power and influence that the educators and schools have when it comes to the promotion of religious tolerance, cultural diversity and democratic citizenship in their learners. This shows the importance of giving guidance at a specific cognitive level for a period of time and further strengthening these teachings at a later cognitive level when the child‟s comprehension has developed.

Constructivists posit that learning is a process whereby new meanings are created or constructed by the learner, based on his or her current knowledge. The new meanings that are constructed by the learner are products of the transfer that occurs between the new experience to be learned and all previous and current learning experiences. Therefore, learning is to some degree personally and culturally relative. (Poplin, 1998)

2.10.   POLICY ON RELIGION AND EDUCATION

For learners to develop to their full potential and receive support across various supportive structures, it is necessary to follow the guidelines suggested by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report (DoE, 1992). The NEPI report recommended a framework for the provision of support services which would be holistic, integrated and interdisciplinary and for inter-sectoral collaboration between various sectors, including school, health, social work, specialised education, vocational and general guidance and counselling and other psychological services. This was in accordance with the need to respect the learner as an individual and to recognise that he or she is part of a broader community and society that shapes his or her development. The NEPI was guided by the following principles, which are emphasised in the Support Services Report:

- The protection of human rights, values and social justice
- A unitary system
- Non-discrimination, non-racism and non-sexism
- Democracy
- Redress of educational inequalities
- Cost Effectiveness

The difficulty of implementing these principles can be seen in the case of Indonesia. As the most populous Muslim country in the world, Indonesia has a unique experience in dealing with Islamic education, a system that was established years before the country‟s independence (Zuhdi, 2006).

According to Zuhdi (2006) when Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945, the country did not have a well-established education system. The existing educational institutions could be categorized into two groups: religiously affiliated and non-affiliated schools. The country adopted a secular political system; and despite the preference of a group of Muslims for religious-based education, the educational authority decided to adopt non-religious-oriented education as its national system. As a result, the religious schools were left outside the system and maintained their independence from the government. However, this did not mean that the government paid no attention to these schools. As these schools had a religious orientation, they were administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) rather than the Ministry of Education. In fact, the modernisation of the curricula of the Islamic schools after independence was also influenced by the government. Zuhdi (2006) examined the modernisation of the curriculum of Islamic schools in Indonesia. According to Zuhdi (2006) Islamic schools form part of a formal education system in which Islam is the only officially recognized religion, and in which Islamic practices is part of the way that schools are regulated. Currently Indonesia has three types of formal Islamic schools: the *pesantren* (religious and traditional boarding schools), the *madrasah* (religious day schools) and the *sekolah Islam* (day schools that combine a secular curriculum with religious teachings).

As previously discussed, in the South African context the state has adopted a cooperative model with regards to the relationship between religion and the state. Whilst ensuring the protection of citizens from religious discrimination or coercion, the cooperative model encourages an on-going dialogue between religious groups and the state in areas of common interest and concern. In addition, the *Draft Policy Document on Religion and Education* (DoE, 2003) links religion and education with new initiatives such as the African Renaissance initiative of former president Mbeki, with moral regeneration, and with the promotion of values in our schools. Religion is described as important for preserving heritage, respecting diversity, and building a future based on progressive values.

2.11.   CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to place in perspective the need for schools and educators to work together to promote nation building and tolerance of religious and cultural diversity. The focus was on how the Department of Education intends to support this notion. This entailed looking specifically at the *Draft Policy Document on Religion and Education*; and at inclusive education as the vehicle to support these ideas. Independent Islamic Schools follow the National Curriculum in order to meet the need for qualified professionals in industry and at the workplace. The question is how do these schools promote religious and cultural tolerance? It is the aim of this study to investigate this question.

The relationship between school and community can be developed in various ways. The more the school and its learners are involved in the development of the community, and the more the community is drawn into the life of the school, the greater the chance of building a strong and constructive relationship and of encouraging the tolerance of religious and cultural diversity. Vandeyar (2007) points out that since 1994 policies have been developed and legislation enacted to encourage the process of desegregation in the schooling system of South Africa. The *South African Schools Act* (Act No. 37 of 1996) together with the Bill of Rights and the South African Constitution, formalised the desegregation of schools in South Africa, and created the opportunity for students from diverse cultural backgrounds to attend schools of their choice.

Any attempt to make a meaningful impact on the lives of learners requires a consideration of the context in which the learners find themselves in. Fataar (2005) enters the debate on the existence of the independent Islamic schools when he acknowledges the community-specific character of Muslim and other independent schools. However, other groups are effectively excluded from these schools. However, Fataar explains that the *South African Schools Act* (1996) makes provision for independent schools to charge fees and enjoy access to public money for operational expenses. All relevant stakeholders have a meaningful role to play in a system that should cater for the development of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, age or disability. Individuals learn differently and express their learning differently. It is only by showing tolerance and respect for individuals that we will be able to accommodate and support one another without prejudice. Fataar (2006) suggest that curriculum policy and

politics have to be understood in the light of the shifting discursive policy terrain of the 1990s. Inclusive education marked a huge shift in orientation, and this had to be embraced with a positive attitude if it was to succeed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the literature review for this study of teachers‟ understanding of inclusive education within an independent Islamic school. This chapter presents the research design as well as the methodology that were employed as the framework for the study. Research design refers to the way in which the research is conceived and executed, and how the findings are eventually put together (Henning, 2004).

Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) define qualitative research as an interpretive study of a specific issue or problem in which the researcher is central to the sense that is made. They argue that qualitative research is an exploration, elaboration and systemisation of the significance of an identified phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) describe qualitative research as a set of interpretive activities which do not privilege a particular methodology over another. Instead qualitative research draws upon and utilises a diversity of approaches, methods and techniques. Qualitative research is holistic and attempts to provide a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationship between causes and consequences with regard to human behaviour (Goetz & Le Compte, cited in Anderson, 1993).

This basic interpretive study (Merriam, 2009) aimed to investigate teachers‟understanding of inclusive education in an independent Islamic school situated in Cape Town. The school consists of a primary school, a girls‟ high school and a boys‟ high school. All three schools are situated on the same premises, share resources and have a joint Board of Trustees. However, each school has its own independent principal and management team which is accountable to the Director of the Board of Trustees.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do teachers within an independent religious-base school understand inclusion?

2. How do teachers understand tolerance of cultural and religious diversity within their school?

3. How do teachers promote cultural and religious diversity, and democratic citizenship?

3.2.   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001) a research design is the plan or blueprint for how you intend to conduct the research. The researcher must understand what he or she wants to achieve, in order to choose the design that best suits the purpose of the research. Three research paradigms can be distinguished within educational research, namely positivism, interpretivism and the critical paradigm (Merriam, 1998; Terreblanch & Durrheim, 1999)

Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004) describe the interpretive paradigm as knowledge which is constructed from people"s intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding. Patton (2002, p. 132) describes the central question in the interpretive paradigm as follows: "What common set of symbols and understanding has emerged to give meaning to people"s interaction?" With this in mind, this research study uses the interpretive paradigm in order to capture the lived experiences of the participants and to attempt to understand how they made sense of their experience. The aim of the study was to investigate the lived experiences of teachers within an independent Islamic school, with regard to inclusion, cultural and religious tolerance and democratic citizenship. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) in Merriam (1998) point out that social reality can only be understood by understanding the subjective meanings of individuals.

According to Silverman (2010) qualitative researchers share a belief that they can provide a "deeper" understanding of social phenomena. In an attempt to obtain in-depth information and understanding of the problem, this study utilises a qualitative approach. It makes use of in-depth interviews, as described by Henning (2004), a process in which teachers are purposively selected and in-depth interviews conducted with individual teachers. These interviews were transcribed and analysed for content (lived experience) and also for their discursive features (the way in which lived experiences are communicated). (See Appendices D & E)

3.3.   RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Focusing upon a single teacher or on a few teachers from a particular section of the school would make it difficult to generalise the findings of this research. Silverman (2006) describes generalisability as a standard aim in quantitative research, which is normally achieved by statistical sampling procedures. However such sampling procedures are usually not available in qualitative research. According to Neuman (2000), qualitative research focuses less on representativity or on detailed techniques for arriving at a probability sample, and more on how the sample (or collection of cases, units, or activities) illuminates social life. The concern of qualitative researchers is to find cases that will support or add to what other researchers have learned about the processes of social life in a specific context. For this reason, qualitative researchers tend to make use of a second type of sampling, described as "non-probability sampling". I have used purposive sampling of information-rich subjects from three groups selected from the total population of teachers at this independent religious school.

This study used a sample of nine educators as the subjects of the study. These educators were selected from the primary school, the girls" secondary school and boys" secondary school. They were selected as participants because they are teachers who deal directly with the educational development of learners and are the ones who implement the curriculum followed at the school. The sample consisted of three teachers from the primary school, three teachers from the boys" secondary school and three from the girls" secondary school.

Careful consideration was given to the selection of participants. Merriam (1998) mentions that purposive sampling involves selecting people or cases that are information-rich and would be good examples for study, or good interview subjects. Where purposive sampling is applied, it is not the number of respondents that matters, but the potential of each person to contribute to the researcher‟s understanding of the phenomena that are the subject of the study (Merriam, 1998).

3.4.   DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

According to Patton (2002, p. 248), "A rich variety of methodological combinations can be employed to illuminate an inquiry question." Studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors linked to that particular method. For this study, semi-structured interviews were utilised as a way of ensuring purposeful conversations (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall; 1994). The purpose of the interview is to find out what is on someone else‟s mind (Xatton, 1990, cited in Merriam, 1998). According to Henning (2004) research interviews are simply one of many possible types of interview – all of which assume that the individual‟s perspective is an important part of the fabric of society and contributes to our knowledge of social processes and the human condition. The aim was to record and explore the experiences and understanding of the participants at the three schools with regard to inclusion, cultural and religious tolerance and democratic citizenship.

3.4.1   SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

This method of data collection was the personal interview, or face-to-face interview with each participant. According to Bernard (2000) semi-structured interviews make use of a list of written questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order. The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to ask questions about the thoughts, understanding and the experiences of participants with regard to the problem or topic under investigation. In the case the subject of the enquiry was the participants‟ understanding of inclusion and their role in the promotion of cultural and religious diversity and democratic citizenship. The

interviews were semi-structured to allow the participants to provide as much information as possible.

The semi-structured interview is not typified by a rigidly planned set of questions; rather it is facilitated by an interview guide, which enables the researcher to establish a structure for the interview and elicit meaningful data via a comprehensive strategy in the form of open-ended questions (McMillan 2008, Cresswell 2007, Burck, 2005, Creswell 2002). An interview guide is just that, a guide. Usually the researcher, as guided by the literature and supported by what the inquiry wants to find out, identifies themes for the interview guide. Under these themes tentative questions can be posed of which some might not even be selected. The researcher has the freedom in the semi-structured format to adjust the questions and to probe should this be required. According to Rapley (2004) the interview guide is more than just a list of questions that aids the interviewer; it also gives some structure to the interview process. (See Appendix C)The interview guide helps to keep the focus on the relevant themes, but leaves leeway for the interviewer to use his discretion and follow the lead of the participants, should this be necessary. Patton (2002) describes the interview as a means of acquiring a new understanding of the problem or topic that is the focus of the interview. According to Mouton (2001) information may be gathered which has the potential to supplement and re-orientate the researcher‟s understanding**.**

Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to an hour, was scheduled at a time that was convenient for the teacher, and was conducted at school. The interviews were conducted in the guidance counsellor‟s room at the school and confidentiality was ensured. Each participant signed a consent form in which they agreed to be part of the study on the basis of strict anonymity and confidentiality. (See Appendix B) The interviewer endeavoured to establish a good rapport with the participants: this enabled them to speak freely and in depth about their thoughts, understanding and experiences. Prior to the focus group interview, the interviews were transcribed and given to the participants as a means of checking and verifying their content. This was done ensure the reliability of the data.

3.4.2   THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

Macnaghten and Myers (2004) describe focus group interviews as a way of finding out why people feel as they do about something. They can be used at the beginning of the research process to guide individual interviews, to discuss the wording of a particular question or to provide advice regarding the themes to be explored in the interviews. In this study the focus group interview was used after the individual interviews had taken place. I wanted to use the focus group to explore themes or questions that were not clear in the interviews, as well as validate the data from the interviews. I also wanted to confirm that my interpretation of the data was correct. The focus group was conducted after the individual interviews, which according to Silverman (2010) is a way of clarifying issues and themes which arose during the interviewing process.

Babbie and Mouton (2004) describe focus group interviews as a way of gathering information that one would not otherwise be able to access. These focus group interviews were useful because they provided an opportunity for teachers from the same school to get together and participate in the creation of meaning. It is this shaping and re-shaping of opinion that helps researchers to gain further clarity on a particular topic. As it was not possible for all the participants to be available at the same time, the focus group interviews were conducted in smaller groups, at the convenience of the participants.

The individual interviews were audio-tape recorded, with the subjects" permission, to enhance the reliability of the data that was collected. By recording the interview, the researcher could both engage in meaningful conversation with the participants as well as observe their actions and responses to questions. Recording the actual conversations helped to ensure that the information provided in the interviewing process was authentic and would be available for audit. This was done with the consent of the participants and the recordings were stored for safe-keeping, in line with ethical research practice. Merriam (1998) explains that in the event of distortions or exaggerations, these can be detected by checking and confirming the account recorded on audio-tape.

3.5.   DATA ANALYSIS

According to Patton (2002) analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, by organising what is there into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units. This study made use of content analysis as described by Patton (2002): this is a qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes the volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings. In this study the transcribed interviews were analysed for consistency and meaning-making. The content was analysed qualitatively for themes and recurring patterns of meaning (Merriam, 2009). (See Appendices D & E)

The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed in full, as the written word provides the basic data for analysis (Katzenellenbogen, Joubert & Abdool Karim, 1997). Ideally, verbatim transcriptions provide the best data for analysis (Merriam 1998). Transcribing the interviews was a tedious and time-consuming process, however, as indicated by Merriam (1998). It would have been costly to hire somebody to do it on one‟s behalf, and one would lose familiarity with the data. However, Merriam (1998) also argues that hiring someone to transcribe allows more time for the researcher to spend analysing the data.

Each word, line and paragraph was examined and coded in an attempt to reduce the chaos and confusion of the information-rich communication of understanding and experience by the participants. (See Appendix D) After this open-coding process, the various codes were grouped together into categories, and labelled according to how they represented particular issues. (See Appendix E) Patton (2002) describes content analysis as a process which involves the identification, coding, categorising, classifying and labelling of primary patterns in the data. This means analysing the core content of the interviews to determine what is significant. The interviewer‟s initial thoughts and ideas were recorded in the form of theoretical notes which assisted in the coding process.

According to Mouton (1996, p. 111), "We analyse data by identifying patterns and themes in the data and drawing certain conclusions from them." Qualitative findings are judged by

their substantive significance. According to Patton (2002) substantive significance is obtained where the analyst addresses questions such as: How solid, coherent, and consistent is the evidence in support of the findings? To what extent and in what ways do the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied? To what extent are the findings consistent with other knowledge? To what extent are the findings useful for some intended purpose? These were questions that the interviewer had to keep in mind when categorising and labelling patterns that emerged during the process of analysis. (See Appendix E)

From the above it follows that the data analysis is a process during which the data is broken up into different components or categories. These categories are reorganised and combined in new ways to form meaning. As Silverman suggests (2006), the analyst should use these codes in order to understand how participants construct meaning.

3.6.   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA

Qualitative research methods provide opportunities for achieving empathy and give the researcher an empirical basis for describing the perspectives of others (Patton 2002). Patton describes empathy as a means of communicating understanding, interest, and caring. Merriam (2009) states that every researcher wants to contribute knowledge that is credible and trustworthy. Merriam further states that to have any affect on either the practice or the theory of a field of enquiry, research must be conducted rigorously in order to present insights and draw conclusions. Regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be met through careful attention to a study‟s conceptualisation and to the way the data is collected, analysed, and interpreted (Merriam, 2009).

Willis (2007) describes validity from an emic construct – as knowledge that emerges through consensus – namely, through the consensus of informants who must agree that the construct matches their shared perceptions. Patton (2002) states that experiencing the setting as an insider accentuates the participant observation. At the same time, the inquirer is aware of being an outsider to the study. Guba and Lincoln (in Merriam, 2009:109) point out that in

order to examine an issue, the study must be internally valid, for "there is no point in asking whether meaningless information has any general applicability".

As stated previously, the data was collected in the form of audio-tape recorded interviews which were transcribed verbatim and given to the participants to check. This checking was done in conformity with what Patton (2002) describes as the triangulation of qualitative data. During this process the consistency of what people say about the same thing over a period of time was checked, and the interview data was compared across participants. During the first process the interview was recorded and transcribed, and participants were afforded the opportunity to check and re-check the transcription and verify its content. The focus group interview took place after the completion of the individual interviews, and this added to the credibility and reliability of the evidence, as participants were able to arrive at collective meanings. This helped to further clarify their individual views and experiences within a controlled, open-discussion situation.

3.7.   RESEARCH ETHICS

Henning (2004) emphasises that when the interview plan has been finalised the process of ethical clarification can begin. One of the important ethical considerations that the researcher had to bear in mind was that he was known to the participants and the institution. The researcher had to consider how his own experience of the school culture might connect with and offer insight into this culture, situation and way of life. The researcher adopted an emic perspective, also known as insider perspective, in which he remained true to the perspective of those studied (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) further explains that experiencing the setting as an insider accentuates the participant part of participant observation. At the same time, the inquirer remains aware that he/she is an outsider to the study.

The Board of Trustees gave permission for access to the school and the staff. (See Appendix A) Once permission was granted, I identified possible participants for the study in all three school clusters. The participants gave informed consent by means of a signed consent form

(see to Appendix B) or contract in which they agreed to participate in the study. The consent form was an agreement between the interviewer and interviewees that the participants were fully informed about the research process and that their privacy and the confidentiality would be protected. Participants were further informed that the information recorded would be stored in a safe place, one that was accessible only to the interviewer.

Further consideration was given to the protection of the identity of participants. They were assigned pseudonymous during the reporting stage as well as during the writing up of the research report. As there are few independent Islamic schools in the Cape Town area, it was difficult to conceal the identity of the school. Every effort has been made in the description of the research site not to mention the school''s name or its location. The identifiable data for the participants were scrambled in an effort to conceal identities. The school and the participants will have access to a summary report of the thesis, in compliance with our agreement.

3.8.   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the research design that was selected for the study. This is to help guide the reader through the process as well as to provide the framework for the research. In the following chapter the data that was collected will be displayed and the themes and categories that the analytical process generated will be presented. These themes and categories will be discussed and analysed in relation to the research questions posed by the researcher at the commencement of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1.   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the data that was collected is presented and discussed. This study sought to understand the educators‟ perspectives on how religious and cultural diversity is managed within the inclusive education paradigm in an independent religious-based school. The inquiry was guided by the following three research questions:

1. How do teachers within an independent religious-based school understand inclusion?

2. How do teachers understand tolerance of cultural and religious diversity within their school?

3. How do teachers promote cultural and religious diversity, and democratic citizenship?

Data analysis was a continuous process that began during the data collection process. Content analysis, as described by Patton (2002), is a qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes the volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings. In this study the transcribed interviews were analysed for consistency and meaning making. My efforts to interpret the data were facilitated by reading through the data and assigning codes to segments of meaning. This was followed by categorizing related codes into groups, and then by looking for relationships between categories. In other words, the content was analysed qualitatively for themes and recurring patterns of meaning (Merriam 2009). (See Appendix E)

The first level of analysis entailed open-coding the data, and then organising it according to themes. Thereafter the raw data extracted from the interviews was studied and organised into

processed data, followed by the identification of refined themes. The research questions were considered throughout this process to ensure that the aims of the study were met. This process resulted in these refined themes:

1. Motivations for teaching at an independent Islamic school
2. Benefits of being a teacher at an independent Islamic school
3. Sense of belonging
4. Understanding of Inclusion and Democracy
5. Understanding of Human Rights
6. Challenges linked to inclusion

4.2.   THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

Careful consideration was given to the selection of the participants. I sought information-rich subjects for the study who could provide quality interviews. They had to be participants who could contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the issues under investigation. Permission was sought and granted by the school principal and Board of Trustees to gain access to the school and its educators. Thereafter the participants were approached and gave their consent to be part of the research project. The data was collected over a period of one month in the one-on-one interviews. This was followed by constant checking and re-checking with the participants to verify the information. Participants had an opportunity to proofread and edit the transcribed interviews.

The theoretical population for this study was educators teaching at an independent Islamic school in Cape Town. Nine educators were purposively selected to become participants in the study. The participants in the study comprised of educators teaching at the primary school, the girls" secondary school and boys" secondary school. The criteria were that they be directly involved in the educational development of learners and the curriculum. The reason that I elected to work with educators is that they guide and teach the curriculum to learners and had a fair understanding of their learners. The sample was selected so as to provide perspectives of educators understanding of religion and cultural diversity within the context of this school and how their understanding and interaction may influence learner development. These educators all had teaching experiences within the non-religious public

schooling sector prior to joining an Islamic school. It was this rich teaching experience that was important in selecting the sample. The sample consisted of three teachers from the primary school, three from the boys" secondary school and three from the girls" secondary school. One-on-one interviews were conducted with each of the nine participants. The interviews lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. All interviews were conducted in the school counsellor"s room which provided a comfortable and confidential environment and ensured that there were no interruptions during the audio-recording process.   To ensure the participants" anonymity, each participant was assigned a pseudonym. The participants consisted of five males and four females whose teaching experience ranged from eight years to 24 years. Seven of the participants had previously taught in the public schooling sector. Imtiyaaz who had nine years" teaching experience, had previously taught at a different independent Islamic school. Aqilah, with eight years teaching experience, had felt the need after one year of teaching to first raise her children before continuing with her teaching career. Yasmine, Zuhayr and Nabeel previously taught at public schools, then at another independent Islamic school, before taking up employment at this particular Islamic school. To protect the anonymity of the school, it was provided with the pseudonym of Hafiz Islamic School.

The table below summarises the participants" profiles:

Participant	Gender	Level of Education	Teaching Experience	Teaching Experience at Hafiz Islamic School
Sedick	Male	Bachelors Degree Postgraduate Diploma Masters Degree	22 years	19 years
Ra"eesah	Female	Teachers Diploma Postgraduate Diploma	22 years	7 years
Yasmine	Female	Bachelors Degree; Postgraduate Teachers Dip.	21 years	10 years
Imtiyaaz	Male	B.Sc Degree; Nat. Diploma in Medical Microbiology	9 years	1 year
Aqilah	Female	Bachelors Degree; Postgraduate Teachers Dip.	8 Years	8 years
Ebraheem	Male	Bachelors Degree Honours Degree Postgraduate Teachers Diploma	20 Years	6 years
Zuhayr	Male	Teachers Technical Diploma	24 Years	5 year
Nabeel	Male	Bachelors Degree Postgraduate Teachers Diploma	14 Years	10 years
Shaakirah	Female	B.Sc Degree; B. Ed Degree Postgraduate Teachers Diploma	14 Years	11 Years

4.3.   CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

According to the principles of inclusive education and the eco-systemic approach, it is the interaction of the various sub-systems that develops the individual‟s meaning-making process. This study explored the facilitation of the learning process as understood by the educators and their interaction with learners. The interaction between educators and learners as a sub-system within a classroom situated in a school with different subsystems is crucial to this study. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) describe the eco-systemic perspective as an integration of both the ecological and systemic theoretical insights. Different levels of the system in the social context are seen to influence, and be influenced by, one another in a continuous process of dynamic balance, tension, and interplay. Systems and subsystems interact with other systems above, below, or alongside them. In addition, each level of system has its own subsystem, which functions in particular ways. The social context of the interaction between educator and learner, as well as the presence of other religious and cultural sub-systems within a school and community context, is significant for attaining optimal educational development.

The research school was an independent Muslim school. In the context of this study it is important to consider the theoretical understanding of school culture. According to Boyd (1992) a school‟s culture is shaped by the attitudes and beliefs of individuals both within the school and outside the school. The culture of the school in this study can best be described as one which promotes the Islamic faith. The school‟s admission policy reflects its religious orientation: the school only admits learners who are willing to respect and adhere to the Islamic ethos and the practices of the Islamic faith. At the time of the study, approximately 1500 learners attended the school, and only two learners were not Muslim. For the purpose of the study the research school was assigned the pseudonym, Hafiz Islamic School, to protect its identity.

4.4.   MOTIVATIONS FOR TEACHING AT HAFIZ ISLAMIC SCHOOL

In exploring the teachers‟ understanding of inclusion, it was essential to gain an insight into their motivation for teaching at an independent Islamic school, rather than a state school in the area. Most of the teachers in the study had taught in or had experience of South African state schools before taking up their current positions.

Imtiyaaz, had managed his own restaurant before exchanging his job for teaching. His decision to join an independent Islamic school was a conscious and personal choice:

> It was basically what a friend, a very close friend of mine, which she asked me one day …. You‟ve been getting out of the community so much, when are you ploughing back? So I sold the restaurant and actually went into teaching, because that was a very sort of, was very close to my heart all the time.

According to Imtiyaaz teaching at an Islamic school was not just about discovering a vocation; it was perceived by him as a way of giving back to the community. He explained that teaching is a way of developing the learners and giving back to the community through the development of the learner. When the learner makes progress, it is not only the individual and his or her parents that benefit, but also the community. Sedick, the Arabic and Islamic Studies educator, and the Head of the Islamic Studies Department at the school, was a qualified technical drawing and maths educator. While teaching at a public (state) school Sedick studied *Deen* (Islamic Religious Studies) part-time and was later offered a scholarship to study Arabic and Islamic Studies abroad. He decided that he wanted to apply his studies of Islam in a secular educational setting. Sedick explained that he wanted a complete change in terms of what he taught. He felt while studying *Deen* that he wanted to teach and lead, but not necessarily as an *Imaam* at the mosque. Thus, instead of becoming a religious leader, he opted to become a teacher. This explains why he chose an Islamic school, in this case, Hafiz Islamic School. He has been an educator for longer than 22 years, 19 of which have been at this school. According to him,

> You have the opportunities to put into practice many of your cultural practices as a Muslim community. You have the opportunity to ….even you yourself as an educator to grow spiritually in an institution like that...

Other participants, like Ra‟eesah, a foundation phase educator, expressed her motivation for teaching at Hafiz Islamic School on a personal level. As she was a Muslim, it was an advantage for her as an educator that the school taught Islamic values. The moral teachings of Islam could be imparted to learners at this school from a young age. Raeesa‟h appreciated being in an Islamic environment. She believed that she could approach her work from the

perspective that she was a Muslim and she was guided by Islamic teachings and values. This educator appreciated that the school ethos supported the values of respect, tolerance, and acceptance of another person for whoever that person might be. The *ādāb*, the manner in which one approaches that person, was respected, and learners were able to perform the *salaah* (prayers*)* at the specified times.

Apart from the Islamic culture and ethos within Hafiz Islamic School, some educators were encouraged by the opportunity to inculcate Islamic values and teachings within their teaching subjects. Some educators indicated their interesting experience to infuse Islamic perceptions and values into their teaching subjects:

Aqilah:

> Like most of our learning areas for example, using Qurʾaanic references. You know just Islamising the whole syllabus, like if you teach Natural Science for example, there are so many things you can do. Bring the Qurʾaan; let the children sit with a translation Qurʾaan, look up verses.

Yasmine:

> First of all I like the idea of being in an Islamic environment. Iʾd like to believe that when do things I approach it with the idea that Iʾm a Muslim…

Raʾeesah:

> At an Islamic school. Being a Muslim myself, the big plus for me is the Islamic values that the schools implement. The moral teachings that Iʾm able to do, not that I canʾt do that at another school but Islamic values to my learners from small.

4.4.1. THE BENEFITS OF TEACHING IN AN ISLAMIC SCHOOL

Fataar (2005) states that the phenomenon of Muslim schools in South Africa should be understood in the political context of a history of separate development. After apartheid, Muslims could argue for the first time that their religion should be included in the public school curriculum, as Muslim communities formed a recognisable part of the political landscape. The justification for an independent Islamic school also derives from communal

and personal religious needs, as described by Tayob (2011). The interviews reflect the communal and personal religious needs of the participants as humans and as educators.

For many of the participants, teaching at an Islamic school benefitted them as individuals. The personal and spiritual development of the individual educator is the key motivation, cited by several participants. Yasmine expressed her preference for an Islamic environment as she valued the respect and tolerance shown for others, and the acceptance of another person for whoever that person might be. This was supported by Imtiyaaz, who stated that within the independent Islamic school there was a strong sense of Islamic teaching, culture and values, and he identified with this.

As might be expected, the school‟s modus operandi was based on Islamic religious principles. The participants gave examples of what this entailed, which related to being able to incorporate religious practices into school duties. According to Ra‟eesah, the school made allowance for educators and learners in the regular school programme, "…..to read their prayers of *salaah* at the specified times". Aqilah shared this view and gave examples of the way *Eid*, and the month of Ramadaan (Fasting) were observed. She explained that educators could teach learners about the significance of important religious celebrations in Islam and create a spiritual atmosphere at the school in support of these important events. Sedick saw his personal development and individual experience within the Islamic environment as providing an opportunity for educators to give back and educate their learners with greater confidence.

4.4.2.   SENSE OF BELONGING

For educators like Aqilah and Ra‟eesa, being in an Islamic environment created a sense of belonging and they felt appreciated as educators. Aqilah described her love for teaching, and especially the satisfaction that she felt at the end of the day. Aqilah, who had attended a Catholic school, attributed her feeling of belonging within an Islamic environment to the apartheid era, when Christian National Education was synonymous with public schooling. Islam was not part of the state school system. With the abolition of apartheid in the early nineties, and the recognition of everyone as equal, the new democratic government was constituted to serve the needs and promote the well-being of the diverse nation. In the new dispensation the 19 separate education departments that had existed in the apartheid era (and

which only promoted Christianity), were merged into one education system. This was a system that serves the needs of all South Africans irrespective of racial, cultural, ethnic or religious background, and one in which all religions are acknowledged.

The importance of being comfortable and feeling a sense of belonging is evident in Nabeel's interview. Teaching in an Islamic school environment has enhanced his self-confidence, something that he did not experience in his former school environment. Nabeel stated that he had reached a point in his career where he was extremely comfortable with who he was and where he was working:

> A lot of times you find that so there's no real acting, no real need to be aloof or keep colleagues at bay because that's usually problems that arise at non Muslim schools which I've found. You can't really become too intimate because your religious background inevitably tends to become a problem of some sort. It tends to create a barrier which very few people can really overcome because there's going to be a point where the other person, or you for that matter, are going to do something which the other person or you do not agree with, simply based on your religious beliefs.

Ebraheem was in agreement with this view. He pointed out that the comfort and acceptance experienced by the individual educator in an Islamic school enables him or her to pray and engage in spiritual activities when the need arises. The educator does not feel at odds with the school environment, as would be the case at a public school. He stated that one always felt as a Muslim you are not exactly part of this. Others will respect you but there's that reserved approach and when the Muslim educators are fasting non-Muslims educators will continue eating in front of you and that there wouldn't be that respect.

The rationale of an Islamic school, as defined by the participants, contrasts with the rationale of state schools during the apartheid era, as described by Fataar (2005). From the interviews it would seem that the Islamic school creates an environment for the spiritual and personal development of the educators, something that was not available to them in public schools during the era of Christian National Education.

4. 5.   TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSION AND DEMOCRACY

Inclusion and inclusive education are about creating opportunities in life for learners to develop meaningful relationships with, and positive perceptions of, all sections of society (Madden, 2003). Learners should be afforded the opportunity to interact with different racial, religious, cultural and ethnic groups in order to develop meaningful relationships, respect and tolerance for others. The promotion of these values and attitudes will assist in developing positive, responsible and disciplined citizens in a multicultural society.

In their discussion of the influence of human rights values on maintaining a positive discipline in multicultural schools, Du Preez and Roux (2010) argue that schools should start developing values such as emancipatory human rights values, and related cultural values,. However, sole reliance on cultural values is not only unlikely to solve the problem of discipline, but could also undermine the efforts to transform the diverse South African society. The independent Islamic school might be viewed as one which does not endorse or support diversity and democratic transformation.

The teachers" knowledge of the DoE"s policy on religion and education in relation to the *South African Schools Act* (Act 94 of 1996), as well as their thoughts on the constitutional right of all citizens to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, were explored during the interviews. On the issue of human rights, some teachers, like Yasmine and Zuhayr, suggested that as followers of Islam they should already be practicing this.

Yasmine:

> …for me from what I know from the little bit that I know about Islam, that"s not foreign. So it comes with being a Muslim and the fact that its spelt out in the constitution is not for me a guideline because its already been spelt out for me as part of what I should believe as a Muslim in the *Qur'aan* and we have the perfect example from Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)

Zuhayr:

> I agree 100% with this policy and I take that from the instruction that we have, the compulsion in the religion that"s number one. So you can compulsively follow your religion. And then you shouldn"t be the cause of somebody knocking your religion in

the sense that you have knocked their religion. So it comes to you show respect to other religions and other religions will show respect to yours.

Others, like Ebraheem, were more sceptical about the practical implementation of the policy:

I think the policy on paper sounds good. In practice it‟s another story…..in terms of freedom of religion can be a slogan but not necessarily a protection. What I mean by that is we are allowed to practice but by the same token; there is still a measure of reservation in our environment.

Table 2 provides a summary of the views of participants that showed some reservations about the implementation of the policy at Hafiz Islamic School.

Table 2: Reservations about policy regarding religious freedom in schools	
Sedick	…Schools are still doing that which is of course unconstitutional so that‟s what is written there. The idea of this was that we would do away with this sectarianism in schools where Christian children would go for biblical studies or Jewish studies, Muslim children go for Islamic studies and combine that into the whole idea of knowing about the religion, bringing in religious education. But so far my personal observation has been schools are not really prepared to take on this change of the subject of this.
Ra‟eesah	Look I don‟t think as an Islamic school we would turn away a learner of another religion. But the learner would obviously have to abide by the school rules and by the moral and Islamic ethos the school is trying to implement and that might be a bit of a problem for some people.
Imtiyaaz	… Yes I agree, I mean whether you are a Muslim school or a Christian school or a non religious school for that matter, whoever applies at that school should actually be allowed to actually enter if they meet that criteria. And maybe one can also not force one‟s religiosity or your beliefs on to a non-believer whether you are at a Christian school and you‟ve got Muslims at the school, forcing your beliefs on to the Muslim children or vice versa.
Aqilah	we‟re very lucky in South Africa that you know we have freedom of speech, especially at a private institution. We take days off and I think it‟s nice, it‟s ok because we should be able to do that, enjoy your religion and have the freedom to do that.
Nabeel	I think the policy has merit. I don‟t discriminate against anybody and I would hate to think that I would discriminate against somebody on the basis of their religion. I‟m tolerant of religion but also conservative about my religion. So conscience about mine as well as other religions, but not discriminate.
Shaakirah	I believe you should allow every person freedom of thought. At no point should I or anybody tell you „That‟s wrong‟ or put you down because of the way you are thinking. However I feel that as a Muslim it is my responsibility to expose that particular individual to the Islamic faith. Not pressurising you to accept my view.

The importance of respect, tolerance and acceptance of others in creating a more disciplined and respectful society, is explained by Du Preez and Roux (2010), and is reflected in the comments of five of the participants. These participants expressed their agreement with the promotion of non-discriminatory attitudes within schools towards different religions. However, other participants expressed some concerns. Sedick, the Islamic Studies educator, was concerned about how schools would cater for learners who may not be part of the dominant religion of the school. He raised a particular concern about religious instruction: "Who"s going to teach about Islam" (or some other religion) within a non-Islamic school?" Aqilah, who attended a non-Islamic school as a learner, expressed her satisfaction at teaching in an Islamic school: "We"re very lucky in South Africa that you know we have freedom of speech, especially at a private institution … We take days off and I think it"s nice, it"s OK because we should be able to do that, enjoy your religion and have the freedom to do that."

Ebraheem, the computer educator in the primary school, had six years" teaching experience at the school. He expressed his agreement with the policy regarding religious freedom, but found the policy to be good on paper, although not necessarily in practice. He was concerned about the influence of the environment (i.e. other subsystems) on learners, who might not make the right decisions. He expressed his concern over the kind of control educators could exercise over learners and with the way constant exposure to other influences might affect learners" ability to make wise choices. According to Ebraheem, "On one level our conscience and our religion have also turned us into exclusive communities." Yasmine, the deputy principal of the boys" school, commented as follows: the "*Quranic* guidance as there is no compulsion on religion and belief, in that the acceptance of non-Muslims within the independent religious base school should in no means be seen as a process of wanting to convert the non-Muslim learner towards the Islamic religion." This view should be seen as supporting inclusion and acceptance of differences within a diverse and multi-cultural society. The acknowledgement of other religions without having to convert non-Muslims to the Islamic faith can be viewed as a suggestion of accepting diversity.

Educational inclusion requires a broad-based collective effort to effect transformation at every level of society. The definition of inclusion has been discussed in Chapter Two. It has been defined by Sayed, Soudien and Carrim (2003) who argue that it requires careful consideration of every aspect of schooling, especially the social context in which the school

finds itself. Only two of the nine participants were aware of non-Muslim learners at Hafiz Islamic School. However, even Yasmine and Nabeel‟s responses reflected some uncertainty about the presence of these two children. Yasmine said that she knew, "….we have a Christian girl on the other side as well." Nabeel stated, "We have had learners or we have learners of, who are not Muslims". Their lack of knowledge of the Christian girl‟s presence could be due to the system of assimilation that is in place at the school. The social context (as inferred from the data) is that Hafiz Islamic School is a school that accepts learners of other religious denominations so long as they are able to be assimilated into the school culture. In other words, no adjustments needed to be made to accommodate such learners.

When asked for their views on the enrolment of non-Muslims learners, all nine participants said they supported this. However, the data suggests that access to the school by non-Muslim learners is seen by most as an opportunity to showcase the Islamic religion and its culture and values. The excerpts from Ra‟eesa and Aqila‟s interviews support the finding that the teachers saw this as an educational opportunity:

Ra‟eesah:

> I would like children of other religions to also attend the school and maybe experience. People often don‟t realise what, or know what a religion is all about and maybe if children of other religions are exposed to the religion of Islam and then they‟ll see things differently.

Aqilah:

> I think it would be excellent because there‟s exposure to Islam but I think you just need to make it clear to them that they will have to sit in on certain classes, it‟s going to become compulsory, that we don‟t exclude them in those classes. I think it‟s important for them to be exposed maybe to Islamic studies and not *Qur'aan*, you know, because there are certain rules regarding the *Qur'aan* but with Islamic studies, they should sit in on the classes and you never know, it could just change their whole attitude towards Islam, for that matter. But I think it‟s important that we do include.

Others, like Ebraheem, described the enrolment of non-Muslim learners and the employment of non-Muslim staff members as an opportunity to "propagate Islam":

I think that"s an excellent way of making *daa'wah* and I think we"ve already started that process by having non Muslim teachers on our staff. I think that in itself is a way in which we are able to get across the innermost workings of Islamic community. All communities have an inner circle that we really don"t show to anyone else. That personal, private conviction that we have with our Creator that we share with each other, but we"re not going to share with a non-Muslim. But now we see someone coming where you are in your natural environment and free to express yourself, that person can change our behaviour, that is an excellent way of making *da'wah* and also allowing people to understand Islam even if it is one person at a time.

These participant responses suggest that the access of non-Muslims to Hafiz Islamic School is viewed as a learning opportunity for the incoming group only. This was furthermore to happen under specific conditions, such as that they should be respectful of the existing structures. Access was thus conditional on compliance with the existing programmes and religious ethos of the school. Aqila stated that "you need to make it clear to the non-Muslim learner that they will have to sit in on certain classes, it"s going to become compulsory, and that they will not be excluded in those classes." She did however think that religious holidays such as Ascension Day should be days on which such learners should be excused from attending school.

The educators" comments reflect an uncritical and superficial engagement with the concept of inclusion. They were not against non-Muslim learners" enrolment, but stipulated various conditions for inclusion, such as that these learners should abide by the existing rules. Educators did not view this as an opportunity for such individuals to make a contribution to their school environment or to ways of thinking about inclusion. Not all educators were in support of full integration into the school. Sedick commented as follows:

I don"t see for instance a non-Muslim coming to this school and sitting in the same class as the Muslim children. I would say there should be a unit catering for the non-Muslims in their environment and the Muslims would be conveying the information and do the teaching without necessarily convincing them that they should be accepting it in terms of making them Muslim. But it should be a unit maybe or a section apart that would cater for those non Muslims and bring their environment here

without having to go against the very grain of Islamic teachings. I think that is maybe the challenge that one has to look at.

The school also employed educators of other faiths. Nabeel‟s impression of the experience of a non-Muslim educator, who was employed at the school, was as follows:

…they (the non-Muslim educators) felt stifled in this religious environment. How can I put it, religion became an issue at many points during their stay here.

From the participants‟ narratives it would seem that they felt that even though access should be allowed to non-Muslim learners and educators, they would be expected to embrace the Islamic ethos and practices of the school. The school would view access by learners from other denominations as an opportunity to promoting Islamic values, and not necessarily as opportunity to include the other (non-Muslim) cultural practices. This raises questions about whether the non-Muslim learners‟ basic human rights were respected and protected.

4.6.   HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 3 of the South African Bill of Rights states that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of religion, conscience or belief. It can be argued that any learner who is accepted at an independent Islamic school has the right to have his/her religion, beliefs or conscience respected. The way in which non-Muslim learners are accommodated at Hafiz Islamic School is one of the issues that are explored in this research.

All nine participants agreed that non-Muslim learners had the right to seek admission to Hafiz Islamic School. However all nine also stipulated that any non-Muslim learner should conform to the Islamic ethos of the school. They justified this stance by stating that the school was established for the Muslim learners. Most of the participants felt that Muslims schools such as theirs were primarily established to educate the Muslim learner in an environment that would be comfortable for such a learner. The following two quotations, from Imtiyaaz and Aqilah, are evidence of this shared view.

Imtiyaaz:

> I really don"t think that we can accommodate them (non-Muslims) in terms of, you know, dealing (with) religious instruction. That really, they should seek someone else. It"s not a matter of, you know, them coming to the school because this is a Muslim school. The school"s whole ethos is built on Islamic principles.

Aqilah:

> I don"t think any other learner will be comfortable at this school, I might be wrong. Because, you know we do so much, we read the *Qur'aan*, we do Islamic Studies, which would be awkward for a non-Muslim unless we, you know, we make some way or accommodate them in some way so they don"t do these learning areas. But because it"s part of our syllabus, its part of the academic performance, it"s going to be very awkward.

4.7.   RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL TOLERANCE

The school environment has a significant impact on the manner in which learning and interaction takes place. The eco-systemic perspective requires an integration of both the ecological and systemic theoretical insights. If all learners are to be respected, it is important to examine how the educators in this study viewed and acted towards non-Muslim learners. The data shows that the educators expressed their readiness to allow non-Muslims access to Hafiz Islamic school. However this willingness was expressed with some degree of caution and was conditional. Sedick, the Islamic Studies educator stated that the non-Muslim should be accommodated in separate part of the school where they could learn about the Islamic religion. The table below summarise some of the challenges identified by the participants:

Table 3: Challenges relating to the inclusion of non-Muslim learners	
Sedick	…We must re-look the model to this extent where maybe we have an institute or a part of Hafiz Islamic School that would cater for teaching non-Muslims about Islam with the intent of them maybe wanting to embrace Islam.
Raeesa'h	…If the non Muslim learner is prepared to follow or to abide because this becomes part of school rule, and if you attend a school and if you make a choice to attend a specific school that should become the ethos and the values of the school should become part of you…
Yasmine	I think it's an opportunity for them to see whoever comes in from the outside to see what it is that we're about and that there is really nothing to fear. That we don't have a Muslim school because here we have a rebel camp preparing to go to Gaza to sort out the Jews or whatever, the Israelis. And then at the same time of course offer them an opportunity to learn that Islam as a way of life. It's a balance.
Imtiyaaz	I would actually welcome it with open arms. I think they should actually because for one, it would actually teach people out there what Islam is actually about. Because there's a lot of misconception.
Aqilah	I think it would be excellent because there's exposure to Islam but I think you just need to make it clear to them that they will have to sit in on certain classes, it's going to become compulsory, that we don't exclude them in those classes. I think it's important for them to be exposed maybe to Islamic studies…
Ebraheem	I think that's an excellent way of making *daa'wah*… I think that in itself is a way in which we are able to get across the innermost workings of Islamic community. All communities have an inner circle that we really don't show to anyone else.
Zuhayr	I believe it would be to the advantage of both Islamia and their family as well as people of other religions. I think it should be open, it shouldn't be just because it's the policy of the country but it should be done on the basis that it is open because Islam is not an elitist religion…
Nabeel	We have had learners or we have learners of, who are not Muslims basically, and we don't discriminate against them. We develop relationships with them which are no different to the other relationships we have with our other learners
Shaakirah	Anytime. I mean our prophets showed us that we are not brought up to teach but to be an example and how are we going to set an example if they're not with us?

Seven of the participants linked access of non-Muslim learners to their willingness to respect, accommodate and tolerate the Islamic environment of the school; this would be of benefit to these learners. This was not necessarily the same as an including learners with diverse religious backgrounds within the dominant religious environment of the school. Aqilah justified her stance by recalling her experiences as a learner at a Catholic school: because of her strong upbringing in Islam she had never felt threatened in any way by having to go to church, or by singing hymns or reading from the bible. Although she had to participate in these activities and programmes, as stipulated by the school, she recollects feeling empowered by her upbringing to hold on to her own beliefs and religious practices. It is within this kind of accommodating environment that the individuals can share and learn from other cultures and religious practices. This exposure could be seen as the challenge to ensure that one's own beliefs are firmly entrenched; in this way respect for and tolerance of other cultural and religious practices can be developed. Parents send their children to specific

schools for various reasons. These include the school's academic performance, its good discipline, and also the opportunity to be exposed to different cultural or religious environments. Some of the participants reiterated that the mission of educators' at the Islamic school was not to convert learners to the Islamic faith, but rather to welcome them and inform them about the Islamic faith, and its culture and practices.

Wolhuter and Steyn (2003) and De Klerk and Rens (2003) suggest that a particularist stance on religion in schools and the acceptance of certain (in their case) Christian values could promote discipline in schools. They also emphasise that what leads to a lack of discipline is the absence of a value system grounded in a specific belief system or life view (De Klerk & Rens, 2003). The view advanced by De Klerk and Rens (2003) is that this specific belief system or life view may be assimilated into the *Quranic* and prophetic teachings within an independent Islamic School. Imtitaaz indicated that the school's whole ethos was built on Islamic principles. This is supported by Aqilah, who states that they read the *Qur'aan* and study Islamic Studies teachings. Yasmine further clarifies the role of the *Quranic* and Prophetic Teachings when she states that "there is no compulsion on religion and belief". Acceptance of the non-Muslim learner within the independent Islamic school should be viewed as an opportunity to show respect for and acceptance of different cultures and religions. It is this respect and acceptance which, according to De Klerk and Rens (2003), will lead learners to behave in a disciplined and tolerant way towards others.

4.8.   TOLERANCE TOWARDS OTHERS IN PRACTICE

The rights and ethics discourse of inclusivity draws attention to the role that schools play in producing inequalities, particularly with regard to marginalised students (Dyson, 1999). Dyson argues that schools ought to create a respectful environment for non-affiliated learners by showing respect for the difference they bring to the school and also displaying respect for their belief systems. Tolerance towards others within a schooling context is needed if schools are to accept, respect and support learners from other religious, class and ethnic groups. The teachers' engagement with the issue of tolerance was linked to their personal philosophies rather than to their actions. When exploring the educators' position on tolerance towards others, Sedick indicates that tolerance is just about tolerating a person but also entails upholding the person's dignity: "I always propagate, that never be tolerant only but also uphold the dignity...." Imtiyaaz stated that tolerance was often dealt with in an abstract way

instead of in a more practical way: "...They basically just cover from a theoretical point of view but nothing is actually being put into place. They should really teach the kids to be tolerant of other people....teachers" as example?" He indicated that teachers should teach their learners tolerance towards other learners and teachers within the school.

Tolerance was described as being situated within awareness programmes rather than as being part of the existing school ethos. Yasmine felt that more was required if awareness of others, and their religious beliefs and practices was to be developed at the school. This awareness programme could be viewed as a subtle way of assisting learners to learn about acceptance and sharing with learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds. The research has indicated that within this school there was no opportunity for the learners to interact with a religiously diverse learner population, as the school has a homogeneous religious population. It is described by Sedick and Yasmine as an exclusive environment. Sedick describes Hafiz Islamic School as a place where,

> …to a very great extent, the learners are not exposed to other cultures and religions. They are really kept in a closed environment. For instance, we don't have contact with any of the schools in terms of programmes where you have perhaps exchange of information, ideas and interacting to sort of want to learn more about one another. We don't really have that kind of thing.

Yasmine agreed with Sedick that although they were a few outreach programmes at the school, the school community largely kept to itself. Within the Islamic school movement this school is "... seen as different, separate". What distinguishes their school from the others is that academically they are considered to be one of the best Islamic schools, and they cater mostly for an affluent Muslim learner population.

Educators shared their views on how tolerance of others could be encouraged through exposure to learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Many of the educators expressed uncertainty about what was being done at school level to promote respect for and acceptance of such learners. There was consensus that most learners did interact with friends and fellow learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds, but this happened outside the school:

Aqilah:

> Like I said I"ve never ever exposed them to people of other religions and I"ve never witnessed their reactions to these people but I say they"re quite OK with it based on, you know our discussions in class and they don"t really have a problem with it. And they"re very interested to know as well...

Ebraheem:

> I think it would depend on how exposed our learners are to learners of other religions. And in terms of what I see in front of me it seems like everyone is exclusive but there may be another world out there that we don"t see where the learners and our kids are exposed to others and actually have a more tolerant view. I don"t see that amongst our learners right here and I think maybe because we"re a homogenous community everybody says the same thing and not go against the community, the Hafiz Islamic School community....

Nabeel:

> Difficult to say actually. From what I"ve seen, tolerant. In many cases when we go to, we"re at Stellenbosch University for example; they interact well with non-Muslims....

The teachers in this study seem to not have given enough thought to their role they might play in preparing these learners for the wider world outside the school. They project a very insular view of education as being limited to the classroom and to the curriculum. The excerpts above are an indication that even though learners are in this homogeneous school environment, they do interact and are exposed to people of different religious and cultural backgrounds, but this happens outside the school. This study was delimited to teachers as participants, so that learners were not part of the study. It would be interesting to find out from the learners directly how they experience respect for and acceptance of others within and beyond the school environment.

Zuhayr indicated that within the school there was a lack of tolerance towards those from a different racial and cultural background. However, in spite of the homogenous religious population of Hafiz Islamic School, differences do exist in terms of class and also ethnicity, as some of the participants" narratives indicate. Though the learners were a homogeneous group when it came to religion, not all learners shared the same racial and cultural

background. Zuhayr put learners‟ acceptance of learners from different religious and cultural background as "50/50", meaning that there is an even split between learners who were tolerant and those who were not. He cites the example of a Grade Seven girl who did not want to stay on at the school because there are too many Indians at the school. He also gives the example of one or two learners who refused to work with a girl of African origin: "they always found excuses not to interact with her, while other learners embraced her …not because she‟s black, but because she‟s a normal child."

This was supported by another participant, Ra‟eesah::

> Children are all of the same religion at our school so they don‟t have a problem with that. But culturally, no, no, no, no. I shouldn‟t…..You have this big Indian-Malay thing at the school that really irks me. And I never believed my daughter when she was here because she had a big problem with it. And I thought she was exaggerating until I came to teach here at the school. And you even find it amongst educators, I‟m sad to say....

From Ra‟eesah‟s response it appears that there is a lack of cultural and racial tolerance, not just among the learners, but also among educators. This she bases on her own experience as an educator at this independent Islamic school.

4.9.   SUMMARY

In this chapter themes within the data were identified and presented. The discussion in this chapter explored the perceptions and responses of all the research participants. The discussion was framed by the DoE‟s draft policy on religion and education, by *The South African Schools Act* (Act 94 of 1996) and the constitutional right of all citizens to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, and even freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds. The views of the teachers on the right of non-Muslims to attend Hafiz Islamic School and their right to express and practice their beliefs were explored. In Chapter Five, I will present the findings and make recommendations for further study based on these findings.

CHAPTER 5

DATA DISCUSSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.   INTRODUCTION

South African teachers are strategic role-players in the shaping of active citizens for a democracy. This study sought to investigate the understanding of inclusive education on the part of teachers from an independent Islamic school in the Western Cape. This school might not seem to fit into the diversity-and-inclusion-in-education paradigm. It could be argued that such schools operate and educate learners on the basis of a value system that works against inclusivity. However, such schools are allowed for in the *South African Schools Act 1996* (Act NO. 84 of 1996) and the *National Education Policy Act 1996* (NO. 27 OF 1996). The latter Act states that everyone has a right to education, and that no educational institution should discriminate against learners on the grounds of race, or on other grounds. As South Africa celebrates its new democracy, it is important to gain clarity about the role of independent religious schools in the establishment of a diverse South African schools community. If inclusive education is the answer to combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities and building an inclusive society (UNESCO, 1994), then this study makes an important contribution to our understanding of the issue in the South African context. The research questions that guided the study were:

1. How do teachers within an independent religious-base school understand inclusion?

2. How do teachers understand tolerance towards cultural and religious diversity within their school?

3. How do teachers promote cultural and religious diversity, and democratic citizenship?

The study‟s participants were nine educators who were purposively selected from the primary school, the girls‟ secondary school and boys‟ secondary school. Semi-structured interviews

were conducted with three teachers from each of the three schools and their narratives were recorded as data. The facilitation of a meaningful discussion of the key findings of the research was linked to the main research questions of the study. Each of the findings is followed by a short discussion in relation to the literature review and the theoretical background in order to maintain continuity within the thesis.

5.2. FINDINGS

This research, which was undertaken at an independent Islamic school, was framed within an understanding that educators can play a pivotal role in shaping and nurturing the learners and in influencing their attitudes with regard to cultural and religious tolerance. Educators have the ability to influence learners within a specific context, and to promote respect and tolerance of religious and cultural diversity. The data provided evidence to support the policy on religion and education contained in the *South African Schools Act* (Act 94 of 1996). This defines the constitutional right of all citizens to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion and even to freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds. As indicated by the Hafiz Islamic School‟s admission policy, and as suggested by some of the participants, non-Muslim learners are allowed to be admitted to the school. However this freedom of admission is be limited in that they would not be allowed to express and practice their religious and cultural beliefs. This could be viewed as an infringement of their right to freedom of conscience, religion and belief.

Hafiz Islamic School was described by the nine educators as a school predominantly for the Muslim learners, a school that aims to nurture and promote their development within the Islamic faith. Within this understanding the acceptance of non-Muslim learners were framed as follows: Non-Muslims were welcomed, provided that they were willing to be assimilated into the Islamic ethos and values of the school. The non-Muslim had to respect Islamic teachings and practices. The acceptance of non-Muslim learners was viewed by the educators as an opportunity to educate them and broaden their understanding of Islam, rather than as an opportunity for the school‟s Muslim learners to develop a tolerance and understanding of other religious faiths and practices.

5.2.1   TEACHERS" UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSION AT THEIR RELIGIOUS-BASED SCHOOL

Inclusion was understood as allowing non-Muslim learners to be admitted to Hafiz Islamic School. All nine educators were fairly open to this possibility. However, the type of access that non-Muslim learners would enjoy at the independent Islamic School was not spelt out explicitly to the non-Muslim parents. There is no documentation available regarding the conditions under which non-Muslims are allowed access to Hafiz Islamic school. Whilst the teachers agreed that access to the school should be available to every learner irrespective of religion, the majority thought that non-Muslim learners should be taught separately from the rest during the Islamic Studies and Quran time. Furthermore, they would have to accept the Islamic ethos and practices of the school. These educators viewed access by non-Muslims as an opportunity for the educators to promote Islamic values, and not necessarily as an educational opportunity for their school community to accept and understand the non-Muslim cultural and religious beliefs and practices. The expectation was that non-Muslim learners would be assimilated into the school culture as if they were Muslim. In other words, no adjustments needed to be made to the existing culture of the school to accommodate non-Muslim learners. However, from a human rights perspective, other learners have the right to be tolerated and for their religious beliefs and practices to be respected. It is argued that Hafiz Islamic School felt short of these human rights perspective. One of the aims of an inclusive education system is to combat discriminatory practices within schools, the community and society.

5.2.2.   TEACHERS" UNDERSTANDING OF TOLERANCE OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

The learning environment has a significant impact in the manner which learning and interaction occurs: it should enhance tolerance and promote the development of the individual learner. The eco-systemic approach integrates both the ecological and systemic surroundings and is pivotal in the development of an environment that is conducive to learning. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2004) for society to respect all learners, the learner should be seen in the context (in this case, an independent Islamic school) in which the individual finds him or herself. This environment should promote tolerance and respectful attitudes towards those from different cultural and religious backgrounds. However some of the

educators indicated that the school"s whole ethos was founded on Islamic principles. It was suggested that the non-Muslim learners should be catered for separately so that they could be in their own environment.

Educators were of the opinion that even though the school"s ethos was built on Islamic principles, and even though learners read the *Qur'an* and were taught Islamic Studies, in accordance with Quranic and Prophetic teachings that there was no compulsion with regard to religious beliefs. The Quranic and Prophet Teachings can be seen as supportive of the principles of inclusive education as well as the requirement of the South African Bill of Rights, Section 3, which protects the rights of those who may be oppressed or discriminated against on the grounds of religion, conscience or belief.

Although Hafiz Islamic School allowed access to the non-Muslim learners; the two non-Muslim learners at the school were not noticeably different as they had assimilated the school"s Muslim ethos. There was no opportunity for these learners to express their own religious beliefs and practices. This could be viewed as discriminatory against the non-Muslim learner, and as being opposed to the principles of inclusive education. The enrolment of the non-Muslim learner within the independent Islamic school was interpreted by these educators as evidence of the respect shown for different cultures and religions. However, some of the educators at Hafiz Islamic School suggested that the non-Muslim should be accommodated in a separate section of the school where their religious and cultural beliefs and practices could be developed, albeit not under the influence of the Islamic teachings.

5.2.3. PROMOTING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY, AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

The data revealed that not all educators at Hafiz Islamic School were eager to expose their learners to other religions or cultures. My findings are that at the school devotes very little energy to inclusion because of the generally accepted view that Hafiz Islamic school is a homogeneous Islamic school**.** This being contrary to the argument of Waghid (2011) who proposes that critical teaching and learning can best be achieved by means of mutuality and love – more specifically complementary forms of friendship. At the time of the study there were only two non-Muslims enrolled as students, so the school has no history of cross-

religious classroom engagement. In theory teachers might make reference to inclusion, but in practice there is no opportunity for learners to engage with those of other faiths. By implication learners at Hafiz Islamic School are not exposed to or afforded the learning experience of interacting with and developing tolerance and respect for other religious and cultural groups. Learners at Hafiz Islamic School might as a result be disadvantaged in their social development and in their readiness or ability to interact with others in a diverse, multi-cultural society.

One of the educators suggested that educators only deal with religious tolerance and cultural diversity from a theoretical point of view, rather than by practical application within the school environment. This view was not shared by all educators: one participant expressed openness to exploring the needs of the non-Muslim learners prior to their acceptance by the school. This exploration was needed to establish the potential of the school to accommodate the needs of non-Muslim learners. Another participant expressed her willingness to accommodate the religious and cultural needs of non-Muslim learners. However the emphasis was on the promotion of the Islamic religion and culture and on leading by example. This implies that whilst the Muslim learners were performing their *salaah* (prayers), programmes would be put in place for the non-Muslim learner that allowed for expression of their own religious practices and beliefs. These participants felt that non-Muslims should not be persuaded to change their religion, but that they should be given the opportunity to view the Islamic religion, observe its practices and recognise its tolerance of other faiths. Though they acknowledged that the school environment did not provide opportunities for learners to interact with diverse religious groups, some participants pointed out that learners did interact with non-Muslim learners outside the school and that they did so in a respectful manner. This interaction was facilitated by the school‟s awareness programmes, but was not part of the formal curriculum.

5.2.4. DIVERSITY WITHIN HAFIZ ISLAMIC SCHOOL

The data shows that the school‟s Muslim educators and student population was quite diverse in terms of ethnicity and race. I consider it a missed opportunity that the school did not promote inclusion through classroom sessions on diversity. Though all the educators and learners (except two) were followers of Islam, they did not all share the same cultural and

racial background. Some learners and educators have Indian cultural roots, while others have Cape Malay cultural roots. Furthermore, though most learners at the school are drawn from the coloured and Indian communities, a minority of the school's learners would be classified as (African) black. This ethnic diversity, together with differences in class between Indian and African learners, sometimes created situations that were characterised by racial tension. One of the participants referred to incidents where Indian and Cape Malay learners had refused to interact with the (African) black learners. It was also suggested that cultural tensions also existed between the Indian and Malay learners and educators. This cultural and racial diversity amongst educators and learners created understated tensions among educators and learners and affected the ways in which they communicated and interacted. This was viewed by some of the participants as evidence of a lack of respect for and tolerance of individual differences.

5.3.   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A researcher's interpretations are prone to be influenced by personal "intuitions, beliefs and knowledge", according to Nieuwenhuis (2007). It is necessary to appreciate that this study of educators' understanding of inclusive education within an independent Islamic school is subject to the same limitations that apply to any qualitative study. As a Muslim, I was very aware of my subjective stance and its potential to influence my interpretation of the findings of the case study. I was cognisant of how one's personal understanding of Islamic religious practices and beliefs could be challenged by the findings derived from the data that was gathered.

Furthermore, as I am also working at the school, I was known to the participants and was familiar with the institution. As a researcher I had to take into account how my own experience of the school culture connected with and provided me with insights into this culture and into the institutional way of life. This means that I was not a neutral observer. I adopted an emic perspective, also known as insider perspective, in my approach to this study, while remaining aware of my outsider status as the researcher.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the research site chosen for my study was a unique mono-religious one, the findings   on the educators‟ understanding of inclusive education were noteworthy within a South African democracy.

The following recommendations are made:

- At the school, structured curricular activities could be incorporated that could promote inclusive religious practices amongst this homogeneous Muslim learner population.

- Educators, of this school community should be encouraged to engage with and promote inclusive practices in order to develop a more democratic and tolerant society.

- The school environment has a significant impact on the way learners learn and interact with each other, and with the existing systems. Further research is needed on the practical ways in which learners from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds can be accommodated within the context of the school so as to develop respect and tolerance for each other.

- Religious-based schools should give careful consideration to their role within society in order to help create a democratic citizenry which embraces religious and cultural diversity.

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In view of the findings of this research, it is recommended that further research be undertaken in the following areas:

- The parents‟ and learners‟ understanding of inclusive education within a religious-based school.

- As this study was limited to one independent Islamic school, it should be replicated at other religious schools to enhance our understanding of the ways in which they can contribute to producing more inclusive societies.

- Research into ethnic and cultural diversity within Islamic schools is to be encouraged, as this is a somewhat neglected area.

5.6.   CONCLUSION

The view of the educators at Hafiz Islamic School, that it is a school which promotes the Islamic faith and practices, was not unexpected. The results of this study reveal that educators at the school were open to accepting learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds at the school. The school community was homogeneous in terms of religion, so these views could not be tested in the classroom. It was evident that the practical application of the principles of inclusive education (which include respect for other faiths and tolerance of religious diversity) posed a challenge for these educators as the school is not religiously diverse. In practice, teachers and the learners were denied opportunities to "live" the values of respect and tolerance in a religiously diverse school. However, the school engages with its Islamic school environment as if the learner population were homogeneous in terms of race, class or cultural background. This is not in fact the case, and as such the school misses an opportunity to educate learners about respect and tolerance in what is an ethnically and culturally diverse (Islamic) school community.

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Appendix A

████████████████████████████████████

August 2009

Department of Education
University of Stellenbosch
Stellenbosch
Cape Town
8000

To Whom It May Concern

<u>Re: Consent to Conduct Research</u>
We the undersigned hereby grant permission to MOGAMAT HABIB KAGEE (st. no. 14675471) to conduct his research entitled - "Teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education within an Independent Islamic School" - at the above-mentioned institution.

Permission is granted for MOGAMAT HABIB KAGEE to engage with selected educators with the individual's voluntary participation and consent. This is granted with the understanding that all information obtained will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity.

We reserve the right to withdraw from the research process at any stage should we deem it necessary.

We wish him well in his studies and looking forward to a cordial working relationship.

Yours in Education

████████████   ████████████

PRINCIPAL   C.E.O.

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

RESEARCH TOPIC: Teachers Understanding of Inclusive Education within an Independent Islamic School

CONSENT FORMS WILL BE REQUIRED FROM

- Participants participating in research

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Mogamat Habib Kagee as part at of his thesis for completion of his master's degree in educational psychology, from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results will contribute towards his *thesis.* You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you fit the profile of subject needed for the study.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will investigate teachers understanding of inclusive education within an independent Islamic based on their various roles and experience at independent Islamic schools.

2. PROCEDURES

If you consent to participate in this study, I would provide further information about the study and the procedures prior to you giving consent.

Should you consent to become a subject in the study, I require that you avail yourself for:

- One personal interview that would require about an hour of your time.

- Participate in one focus group session with other subjects in the study.

Both these activities will require approximately 2 hours of your time.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I do not foresee any risk or discomfort to the subjects.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

By talking about their experiences; motivations, advantages and challenges; at an independent Islamic school, participants could make new meaning of their roles as educators whereby they could make further contribution to the development of learners and the institution as whole in becoming a better Islamic school. New meanings and improved Islamic ethos could indicate to society the importance of having an independent Islamic school with tolerance and respect for other religions and cultures.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No payment will be received for participating in this study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that could be used against you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of *coding procedures and plans to safeguard data, including where data will be kept, who will have access to it, etc.* The confidentiality of these tape recordings and transcripts (electronic or printed) will be further protected by keeping it under lock and key in a secure cabinet in an office. Your identity will be safeguarded at all times.

After the interviews you will have access to the transcriptions. The recordings will only be used for the transcriptions and will be destroyed once the data have been published in a report.

The results of the research will be shared with my supervisor and released to the school in the form of a report. It may also be presented at a professional conference and in the form of a research article in a professional publication. In all situations

results will be presented in such a way that they cannot be linked to any individual participant of the study.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Should you decide to, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences of any kind. It is your right to refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact **MOGAMAT HABIB KAGEE** *Principal Investigator,* **021 696 5600 office, 072 4524485 cell.** Address, **17 Lascelles Str, Garlandale, Cape Town, 7780.**

 Prof. Doria Daniels *Supervisor,* **021 8082324 office.**
Address, **Department of Education Psychology, Gerricke Building, van Ryneveld Street Stellenbosch.**

9.   RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Maryke Hunter-Husselman at the Unit for
Research Development (tel: 021/8084623; fax: 021/8084537
;email mh3@sun.ac.za).

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to [*me/the subject/the participant*] by [*name of relevant person*] in [*Afrikaans/English/*] and [*I am/the subject is/the participant is*] in

command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [*me/him/her*]. [*I/the participant/the subject*] were given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to *[my/his/her]* satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I   declare   that   I   explained   the   information   given   in   this   document   to _____ [*name of the subject/participant]. [H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into _____ by _____*].

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator   **Date**

Interview Guide

Thanks you for agreeing to an interview with me. I appreciate you taking the time out of your heavy schedule for this particular interview.

A. Demographic information.

Firstly, I want to know about whom you are and your academic background. If you could tell be a bit about your:

1. Qualifications

2. Where, when did you graduate?

3. When where you appointed at ▇▇▇ and how long are you here?

B. Roles and responsibilities

I would like us to next talk about your responsibilities at ▇▇▇a, if that is Ok with you.

1. You said that you started teaching at this school in (see response above for info). Describe your teaching responsibilities at the school?

2. Could you describe your administrative responsibilities at the school by way of some examples?

3. Describe the other responsibilities that you have that are tied to your job.

4. How are these responsibilities similar to that which you would have at a regular state school?

5. How would they be different?

6. Given your roles at the school, what would you say would be specific requirements for your particular role?

7. What would be qualifications for this role particular role?

C. Motivations for teaching at school

1. What are some of your motivations for teaching at this particular school? Are there advantages in teaching at an Islamic school? Could you elaborate on it?

2. I am sure that it is also challenging at the same time. Do you want to comment on the challenges?

3. I am sure that you had certain expectations of teaching at ▮▮▮ (as opposed to a "regular" school):

   a.   What were your expectations?

   b.   Teaching at this school, did they meet your expectations? Can you provide me with some example of this?

4. Given your experience at ▮▮▮, would you consider teaching at any other school?

5. Why is that so? (anticipate that you will get a certain type of answer – PROBE the why!) , would this be a consideration for you and what would be your motivation?

D. <u>Religion and the educational task</u>

1. "According to the policy on Religion and Education, it states that The South African Schools Act (Act 94 of 1996) upholds the constitutional rights of all citizens to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, and freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including religion, in public education institutions. What would be your thoughts regarding the policy? In your view was ▮▮▮ created specifically for Muslim students.

2. What are your views on allowing access to non-Muslim students?

3. What make you say so? (PROBE!)

4. If the response was in the negative, ask: Lets for arguments" sake say that this happens, how would the structure, ethos, etc. of the school change? Should they be accepted, what changes do you anticipate in the existing situation/s q?

5. How would you accommodate non-muslims at this school w.r.t their religious rights and practices?

E. <u>Next I would like us to focus on citizenship and education's role</u>

1. How would you describe yourself as a South African?

2. Are South African children being prepared for their role within the South African community? Who would you say takes that responsibility?

3. What role does the school play in adequately preparing learners for this task/responsibility? Can you provide some examples?

4. Would you consider this to be effective/enough/ what could be done differently/more, etc.

5. Do you in your role as educator prepare learners to socialize beyond the perimeters of the school? How? Ask for examples. How important is it to teach learners to coexist with other SAs?

6. How is tolerance towards others addressed in the curriculum?

7. How is tolerance towards others addressed by the teachers?

8. How is tolerance towards others addressed by the administrators of the school?

9. In your view is enough being done? Please elaborate on this?

10. Are teachers at this school tolerant towards cultural and religious diversity

11. How would you describe some of the methods you employ to promote cultural and religious diversity?

12. As a citizen within our new democracy, a community member participates in all the activities, makes valued contributions and receives the necessary support from the community. Consequently for a learner to develop and attain his or her optimal level of growth, it is imperative that they experience a sense of been included without prejudice and is respected for the view points and values which they bring to the classroom.

13. How does ▮▮▮▮▮▮ as a school promote democratic citizenship?

14. How do you promote democratic citizenship in your classroom and the school as a whole?

15. In your view does the curriculum prepare learners to function in a wider South Africa? Please provide examples of this.

16. Would you say there is a need for educators" to change or adjust the curriculum to provide adequate preparation for learners as South African citizens?

2. Tolerance towards Others:

1. Would you say that ▮▮▮▮ as an Institution, is tolerant towards others of different religious backgrounds, please provide examples of this?

2. In your view, how tolerant are learners from this school towards other religious denominations? Please provide examples?

3. Are you as an educator encouraged to get learners to be tolerant towards others? Please provide examples.

4. How does the school"s administrators and management promote tolerance towards others?

Appendix D

8th Interview

1.   INTERVIEWER: Mr ███████████, I want to thank you once again for agreeing to this interview with me. I appreciate your time that you have offered for this one. I just want to start off perhaps to know a little bit about who you are and your academic background, so if you can just tell me a little bit about your qualifications and when and where you graduated?

2.   INTERVIEWEE: Ok I graduated from University of the Western Cape, that's when I started with my BSc and I have approximately 14 years teaching experience of which one year is in a state school, with ███████, thirteen years at basically Islamic school, ███████ and ███████ being 9 years.

3.   INTERVIEWER: So when were you appointed at ███████?

4.   INTERVIEWEE: That would be 2000.

5.   INTERVIEWER: You said that you started in 2000 with 9 years of teaching experience at ███████, can you perhaps describe to me some of your teaching responsibilities here at ███████?

6.   INTERVIEWEE: It's primarily being as educator but of late I am also involved in administration. Well basically I've been involved in most of the spheres in terms of education at ███████ besides Management which I haven't been involved in. Anything from doing reports to, at the moment I'm Grade Head, sport and helping. I've been involved in a lot of things at ███████.

7.   INTERVIEWER: Now you spoke about your administrative responsibilities, just some examples?

8.   INTERVIEWEE: Well at the moment it's Grade Head which means that I basically facilitate, or at least play a role as facilitator between the school and learners who basically need help. To identify learners who need help and then obviously trying to liaise with parents as well and to see where we can accommodate these learners with their needs, giving some support.

9.   INTERVIEWER: You spoke about something that you do with reports as well?

10.   INTERVIEWEE: Ok that's basically involves doing reports.

11.   INTERVIEWER: So basically manage the reporting system?

12.   INTERVIEWEE: Ja, that's right.

13.   INTERVIEWER: Are there any other responsibilities that you have tied to your job?

Appendix D

8th Interview

14. INTERVIEWEE: I don't know, sport, and then obviously I was involved in the ▇▇▇ Council.

A1.

15. INTERVIEWER: Are these responsibilities similar to that which you would have at a regular state school?

16. INTERVIEWEE: I think so.

17. INTERVIEWER: Any difference?

18. INTERVIEWEE: If there's any it's the Islamic perspective and I think we have the Islamic guideline which we basically use to implement basically everything we do and that has been my concept or at least my approach to education, my teaching. We basically have guidelines, as far as I'm concerned that guideline is islamically based and I just basically use that then to approach any situation.

Diff.
I.s: + P.s.

19. INTERVIEWER: Now given your roles at ▇▇▇, what would you say would be specific requirements for this particular role that you have?

20. INTERVIEWEE: Specific requirements? Is that the personality requirements or …?

21. INTERVIEWER: Whatever. What specifically you think of. In your view?

22. INTERVIEWEE: Would you mind rephrasing the question?

23. INTERVIEWER: What would you say the person who has your role, what would that person require?

24. INTERVIEWEE: I think patience, number one, and understanding. A little bit of insight as well, being able to identify where a problem, where a specific learner may be, it's important. Often you find you interview a learner and within the first five minutes you can obviously see that you know this is where the problem is. Sometimes it's a social problem, sometimes it's family issues. So being able to, you know identify, be aware, I think is most important.

Q.R,

Q.1,

25. INTERVIEWER: That sounds like, is that something that comes with experience?

26. INTERVIEWEE: I think so. It does come with experience. I think I remember a time when I would not have been able to identify certain issues simply because of lack of exposure probably. As time goes by and having identified or being exposed to specific situations, after a while you tend to pick up on it a lot easier.

Q.1.

27. INTERVIEWER: Any specific qualifications for this particular role?

Category 3: **MOTIVATION FOR TEACHING AT** � ▬▬▬▬▬

	M.T.I	C. Teaching	A.T.I.S.	D.T.I.S	P.I.	E.T.I	R.E.T.I.
Respondent 1	...after I have gone for studies of deen that I would like to go and teach whatever I've learnt but not necessarily as an Imaam at the mosque.	So I felt that other alternative would be to run community classes but on a voluntary basis	...we can say for instance that you have the chance to apply what you have learnt in terms of deen... ...you yourself as an educator to grow spiritually in an institution like that... ...uplift others who are under your care...	... two competing systems... the one that will automatically suffer as you go towards the higher standards...	... Ja, we offer Islamic studies, Qur'aan and Arabic', I don't think those are really draw cards anymore to a certain extent for parents. Because as you go up you can see the interest of parents are in the maths, your physics and your core subjects they need to go to university and so forth. Very little or very small percentage of our learners really go on to learn deen...	... a place I can feel safe in. My children can come here and the idea behind this is that they will come out here as ultimately as good, whatever that means as a good Muslim young person, a good young person Islamicaly speaking...	... There are those who are, definitely, but they are in the minority, unfortunately. ... and it's the bulk of our learners unfortunately, try to bring them back from that wayward path completely try and bring them back sort of to the vision and mission of the school...

Appendix F

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27 November 2009

Tel.: 021 - 808-4622
Enquiries: Sidney Engelbrecht
Email: sidney@sun.ac.za

Reference No. 229/2009

Mr MH Kagee
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7602

Mr MH Kagee

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

With regards to your application, I would like to inform you that the project, *Teachers understanding of Inclusive Education within an Independent Islamic School,* has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards

MRS. MALÉNE FOUCHÉ
Manager: Research Support