CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
INTRODUCTION

In the previous section, conclusions and limitations were discussed, although only briefly. This section includes the conclusions and limitations of this research study in more detail, and also includes the recommendations arising from the study, as well as the reflexivity of the researcher.

1. LITERATURE CONCLUSIONS

Literature on the perceptions of educators regarding emotional problems in children, emotional and behavioural disorders, internalised and externalised behaviours in children, the roles of educators, as well as learning disabilities and the impacts thereof on school work was sought and examined. There is an abundance of literature available on internalised and externalised behaviours in children, as well as on learning disabilities or the impact of emotional problems on school work. However, there was very little literature available on some of the themes identified in this study. Some of these themes included: attention-seeking behaviour, with regard to how educators understand this behaviour; changes in the usual behaviour of children; the utilisation of resources by educators; as well as thumb sucking in older children.

The majority of the literature focuses on general internalised and externalised behaviours, and not on shifting or changes between the two. With regard to changes in the usual behaviour of children, it was very difficult to find current literature, and this is perhaps a topic for future research. The educators involved in this study showed tremendous insight and did not focus only on externalising behaviour, but also on various aspects of behaviour as indicators of emotional
disturbances in children. Although this research topic has been explored widely, there remain aspects that need further research, specifically regarding collaborations between primary school educators and helping professionals.

2. EMPIRICAL CONCLUSIONS

The method of data collection used in this study proved to be appropriate and led to the achievement of the research objectives. The focus group interviews gave the participants a platform to discuss their perceptions, as well as their experiences. The findings obtained through the focus groups were rich, even though at times some participants offered more contributions than others. Member checking allowed the researcher to ensure that the results discussed in this study did in fact provide a true reflection of the perceptions of the participants involved. When member checking was conducted, the participants were very pleased with the results, and even stated that the results were ‘well reported’.

3. LIMITATIONS

Limitations of this study included the following

- The small sample size. There were 18 participants involved in this study, and a larger sample would have provided more information regarding the research topic.

- Another limitation of this study was the use of only one method of data collection. More than one method of data collection might have led to more in-depth information.

- The participants involved in this study all teach at middle-class schools. The perceptions of educators currently teaching in private schools as well as schools in lower socio-economic areas are not accounted for.
• The participants involved in this study also included more women than men. The perceptions of male educators might have provided a different perspective.

• The majority of the educators in this study were educated, having obtained either a diploma in education or a formal degree in education. This may have influenced the raw perceptions of the educators, and the views of educators who do not have a formal degree might differ.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study follow:

• The findings of this study may contribute towards future collaboration between educators and psychologists, counsellors or social workers.

• This study’s findings also indicate the importance of the abovementioned professionals being on hand at schools for effective interventions with children suffering from emotional problems.

• It is recommended that further research is conducted with regard to educators employed in schools in lower socio-economic areas in order to ascertain whether the results of this study apply to the majority of South African educators.

• Further interventions are needed with regard to increasing educator support, as well as improving and increasing relations between parents and educators.
• Educators in training could benefit from learning basic counselling skills such as active listening and advanced empathy. Such training should help them understand that they do not need to know all the answers or have the means to change the children's situation.

• Further research needs to be conducted regarding the general health and well-being of educators. Specific attention needs to be given regarding possible burnout in educators.

• It is highly recommended for more educational psychologists and counsellors to be employed by the Department of Education.

5. REFLEXIVITY

At the start of this research study, I assumed that the literature would be predictive of the outcomes of this study, and that educators would lack insight into emotional problems in children. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the participants in this study showed tremendous insight into emotional problems, and that they not only showed insight, but also found means to intervene. In other words, I was amazed at how the participants care for the children they educate. This research study has dramatically changed the way in which I regard educators. On the basis of my past experiences, as well as from the experiences of friends, I used to feel that educators were not as sensitive and caring. Through this study I discovered the true nature of good educators, who make sacrifices and work under pressure, facing many difficulties but without their light being extinguished. The educators involved in this study have given me renewed respect and admiration for all educators.