A COMPETENCY MODEL FOR SECURITY OFFICERS: A QUALITATIVE DESIGN

by

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STATEMENT

I, Lindy-Lee Lubbe, student number 32765932, declare that:

A competency model for security officers: A qualitative design

is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or have quoted from

have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE   DATE

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ABSTRACT

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Crime is rife in South Africa. Explanations abound for the high crime statistics, including the weakening of the family unit, the political history of South Africa, urbanisation and the fast growing urban neighbourhood, a weak criminal justice system and the abundant availability of firearms. In the quest to prevent crime, the private security industry has become a key performer in helping to deter and prevent crime and criminal activities. Yet there are no set criteria for selecting security officers against the backdrop of the high crime rates and a growing private security sector. Therefore the purpose was to develop a competency model for the selection of security officers for the safekeeping and protection of persons and property in the Thaba Tshwane area. I chose to do qualitative research using an interpretive approach in an attempt to understand the views of the participants concerning the work context and requirements of security officers.

A grounded theory approach to the strategy of inquiry was employed as it was best suited to keeping the information that was gathered grounded in the participants' own opinions. The focus of this research was on designing a competency model for security officers for selection purposes. Data were gathered through disciplinary records and open-ended structured interviews where the repertory grid and the behavioural event interview were applied.

Eight subject matter experts, who included security officers, managers and a client working in the security industry, were used. The result of the study was a competency model of nine competencies and their definitions, which were grounded in the data and critical in functioning as an efficient security officer.

Keywords: competency, competence, competency modelling, qualitative research, grounded theory

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

Determine that the thing can and shall be done
and then we shall find a way.
(Abraham Lincoln in Covey & Hatch, 2006, p. 181)

1   INTRODUCTION

Taking Abraham Lincoln's advice concerning my research project, a key step in accomplishing anything is to start making plans about the best processes and methodologies to follow. Making the decision to embark on this research was a first step, but determining which *method* to use or the best approach to this study was also very important. In agreeing with President Lincoln I have tried in this chapter to explain my thought processes in choosing to do a qualitative study. I attempt to clarify why and how I have used an interpretive approach in an attempt to understand the views of the participants in this study with regard to security officers' competence for selection purposes.

This chapter is therefore focused on contextualising the study. Firstly, the context leading up to the research problem is presented by focussing on South African crime and the private security industry, as well as on my evolving interest in the current study. The problem statement follows and the aim of the study is stated. The significance of designing a competency model for the selection of security officers is discussed next, followed by a glance at the research design for this study. The reason for the particular strategy of inquiry concludes the discussion about research methodology. The focus then shifts to my qualitative research journey, which encompasses how I gained access to the field of study, my data collection approach and the approach I followed in analysing the data.

1.1 CRIME IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE PRIVATE SECURITY INDUSTRY

The need for security services is evident in the underlying socio-economic etiology of crime. Since the beginning of mankind, two conditions appear to have dominated the quest for private security and, by implication, crime prevention: a *felt need* and *sufficient resources* (Timm & Christian in Steenkamp & Potgieter, 2004). Because of real threats or risks that could cause emotional, economic or physical harm, security measures are needed for the protection and prevention of crime. The need for safety and security is combined with resources to discourage and minimise the potential enormity of real or imagined danger (Timm & Christian in Steenkamp & Potgieter, 2004).

Therefore, in this section the focus falls on the possible causes of crime and the statistics of crime in South Africa as a confirmation of the need for security services. A brief look at possible ways to prevent crime follows. To illuminate the nature of available resources in crime prevention further, the private security industry is discussed under the subheadings of growth, nature of the work, education and training and lastly employment in the industry.

1.1.1 Possible reasons for crime and crime statistics

Studies exploring possible reasons or explanations for the high crime index in South Africa have been conducted (Gilling, 1997; Minnaar, 2005; Newham, 2006; Schönteich & Louw, 2001; Singh, 2008). Some authors believe the increase in the crime rate is due to the transition to democracy South Africa is going through (Potgieter, Ras & Neser, 2008; Schönteich & Louw, 2001). Another reason for the high levels of crime is said to be the culture of violence in South Africa. South Africa's political history, which weakened the family unit and thus parental control over children, may have encouraged youth into criminal behaviour (Schönteich & Louw, 2001). Schönteich and Louw (2001) explain that the culture of violence theories argue that the effects of apartheid, together with years of political violence and continued exposure to violence in the home, have produced a destructive culture. Another explanation for the

increased crime rate is urbanisation and fast growing urban neighbourhoods. This phenomenon may deteriorate into typical slum areas, which could serve as the breeding ground for poor social contact as well as economic crime and moral decay (Potgieter et al., 2008). Schönteich and Louw (2001) thus explain that South Africans have a tendency to resort to violence as a means of solving conflict, whether this is domestic, social or in the work environment. Other reasons for crime that Schönteich and Louw (2001) highlight include rapid urbanisation, a weak criminal justice system and the abundant availability of firearms. Table 1.1 below presents South African crime statistics in the period 2003/2004 to 2008/2009, derived from the crime information management system of the South African Police Service (SAPS).

Relying on the SAPS statistics, it is obvious that crime is rife in South Africa. When highlighting a few statistics about crimes against the person, for instance the murder rate, one sees that there has been a 1,8% decrease in murders, but the murder statistics still stand at a staggering 18,148 murders for the year from April 2008 to March 2009. The total number of sexual crimes increased to 70,514 for the year from April 2008 to March 2009. Turning to property-related crimes, burglaries at business premises increased by 11.1% from 62,239 to 70,009. Burglaries at residential premises increased by 3.7% from 237,491 to 246,616. Stock theft increased by 4.4% from 28,722 to 30,043 for the year from April 2008 to March 2009.

I believe that South Africans have become quite accustomed to crime, but seeing real crime statistics on paper made me very aware of the severity of crime in South Africa. Now that a few reasons for crime have been highlighted and the stark reality of crime in South Africa has been shown through statistics, I focus the attention on what can be done about crime in South Africa. I now focus on crime prevention.

Table 1.1: Crime in South Africa from April to March: 2003/2004 - 2008/2009

Crime Category	April 2003 to March 2004	April 2004 to March 2005	April 2005 to March 2006	April 2006 to March 2007	April 2007 to March 2008	April 2008 to March 2009	% increase or de-crease
CONTACT CRIME (CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON)							
Murder	19,824	18,793	18,545	19,202	18,487	18,148	-1.8%
Total sexual crimes	66,079	69,117	68,076	65,201	63,818	70,514	10.5%
Attempted murder	30,076	24,516	20,553	20,142	18,795	18,298	-2.6%
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	260,082	249,369	226,942	218,030	210,104	203,777	-3.0%
Common assault	280,942	267,857	227,553	210,057	198,049	192,838	-2.6%
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	133,658	126,789	119,726	126,558	118,312	121,392	-2.6%
Common robbery	95,551	90,825	74,723	71,156	64,985	59,232	-8.9%
PROPERTY-RELATED CRIME							
Burglary at business premises	64,629	56,048	54,367	58,438	62,995	70,009	11.1%
Burglary at residential premises	299,290	276,164	262,535	249,665	237,853	246,616	3.7%
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	88,144	83,857	85,964	86,298	80,226	75,968	-5.3%
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	171,982	148,512	139,090	124,029	111,661	109,548	-1.9%
Stock theft	41,273	32,675	28,742	28,828	28,778	30,043	4.4%
SUBCATEGORIES OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY FORMING PART OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY ABOVE							
Carjacking	13,793	12,434	12,825	13,599	14,201	14,915	5.0%
Truck hijacking	901	930	829	892	1,245	1,437	15.4%
Robbery at business premises	3,677	3,320	4,387	6,689	9,862	13,920	41.1%
Robbery at residential premises	9,351	9,391	10,173	12,761	14,481	18,43	27.3%

1.1.2 Crime prevention

Crime prevention is not a new concept and has been around from the beginning of time. There are different approaches to crime prevention, displaying different forms of crime prevention including techniques (correction or deterrence), developmental stages (proactive or reactive) and sites (offenders or victims) (Gilling, 1997). Gilling (1997) suggests that crime prevention is a worthy cause and anything that can be so labelled by implication carries a good deal of favour. In South Africa with its high level of serious crime, the demand for an effective criminal justice system is serious. The general public questions the ability of the police to protect them from crime. As perceptions of the degree of crime and the sense of the state's inability to protect its citizens escalate, "people with the necessary means use private forms of security to protect themselves and their possessions" (Schönteich, 1999, p. 66).

Because of the enormity of the crime problem in South Africa and lack of monetary and human resources to fight crime in the SAPS, the metropolitan police department (MPD) was established. In 1996 the National Crime Prevention Strategy for reducing crime by using the MPD was launched with high expectations (Newham, 2006). The 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security, cited by Newham (2006, p. 3), defines crime prevention as

> *…all activities which reduce, deter or prevent the occurrence of specific crimes, firstly by altering the environment in which they occur, secondly by changing the conditions which are thought to cause them, and thirdly by providing a strong deterrent in the form of an effective criminal justice system.*

SAPS members are trained to police serious crimes and investigate cases, gather crime intelligence or hold criminal suspects (Newham, 2006). Even though the MPD was established to help with crime prevention, its members have not received the mandate to investigate serious crimes, gather intelligence or hold suspects longer than what it takes to hand them over to the police (Newham, 2006).

The private security industry is another key performer in crime control, whether it is in relation to protecting the public sector, the public domain or private property (Potgieter et al., 2008; Singh, 2008; Steenkamp & Potgieter, 2004). Private security companies are seen as prevention rather than law enforcement and are indeed mainly used as a measure to prevent crime (Singh, 2008). Potgieter et al. (2008) raise concern about whether the security industry can stand up to the challenge of crime prevention in the new millennium. Ras (cited in Potgieter et al., 2008) proposed that perhaps the only solution to preventing overseas visitors from falling prey to criminal victimisation in 2010 will be efficient bodyguarding, as well as ordinary guarding services supplied by the private security industry.

1.1.3 Private security industry

The private security industry has experienced a dramatic increase in growth, and simultaneously greater demand to be involved in crime prevention (Minnaar, 2005; Minnaar & Ngoveni, 2004). Owing to limited financial and human resources, the SAPS cannot meet the diverse safety and security needs of the market. Therefore, the private security industry fulfils the security need the police are unable to satisfy (Schönteich, 1999). In addition, the private security sector has the ability to employ security officers on permanent or part-time contracts, which is impossible in public policing because of strict public service regulations (Schönteich, 1999).

Levinson (2002) explains that private security generally refers to companies that focus primarily on crime prevention and investigation for specific individuals and organisations. In the American history of the private security industry from 1960, private security positions began to exceed the number of positions for sworn officers and the number is still growing (Levinson, 2002). Because of increased awareness of inefficiencies in providing conventional police services, communities and companies have bypassed their police departments altogether and contracted portions of public protective services

to private agencies (Levinson, 2002). Levinson (2002) explains that the private security industry has exploded since 1975 in the United States. Similar trends have been reported in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Bavaria and Switzerland (Levinson, 2002).

Advantages of privatising the security industry include that personnel can be dismissed more easily if they do not conform to the agency standards. Another advantage is the competitive inducement to maintain high levels of quality and quantity demanded from a private security company by the buyer of the security company's services and the credible threat of replacement if the security company fails to render the desired levels of service. Private security companies tend to be more receptive to innovation and risk taking. Private companies tend to have a strong incentive to respond to specific and diverse user needs, suggestions and complaints and can do this more quickly. Private security officers have the authority to stop and challenge any person without probable cause, for trespassing in a designated private area (Levinson, 2002). Owing to these advantages derived from private security companies, the security industry also experienced immense growth in South Africa.

1.1.3.1 Growth in the private security industry

The private security industry is growing at a phenomenal rate (Minnaar & Ngoveni, 2004; Schönteich, 1999). Singh (2008) explains in her research that private security officers outnumber police officers in the South African context by as much as 7:1. T. Scallan (personal communication, June 10,2009), chairmain of the Training Security Industry in South Africa, supplied the South African private security industry's statistics, which included 339,343 registered security officers (one in six of the population) of which about 180 000 are active, and there are 5,989 registered security companies. Reasons for the rapid expansion included the withdrawal of the state from some policing functions, the extensive growth in private property, the inability of the police to protect private citizens (whereas the role of the police is to react to crime,

private security companies' aim is to reduce the risk of crime) and the private security companies' ability to adjust more readily to changing consumer demands (Minnaar & Ngoveni, 2004; Schönteich, 1999).

1.1.3.2 Nature of the work

Pillay and Claase-Schutte (2004) suggest that the private security industry primarily consists of three business areas, namely protection and safeguarding of property or persons in general, reactive security and armed escort services.

Security officers inspect and patrol areas to prevent and protect property from vandalism, theft and illegal activity. Private security officers patrol shopping centres, workplaces, apartment buildings and neighbourhoods. Security officers perform many of the same duties. Security officers working at a specific location become closely acquainted with the property and people working in their environment and must often monitor alarms and closed circuit TV cameras while doing their normal patrolling duties. The security officers' job responsibilities may vary with the size, type and location of the employer. Security officers also often work undercover to prevent or detect theft by customers or employees (Bureau of Labour Statistics [BLS], 2009). Security officers must demonstrate good judgement and common sense, follow directions and follow company policies and guidelines (BLS, 2009). While guarding is generally routine, security officers must constantly be alert to threats to themselves and the property they are protecting. Therefore the training standards of security officers are key issues in the industry.

1.1.3.3 Education and training

Even though in the United States unarmed security officers have no specific educational requirements, this is not the case in South Africa. Training and education of security officers are governed by the Private Security Industry of South Africa (PSIRA) and fall under the Private Security Regulations Act 56 of

2001. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SASSETA) and PSIRA on 4 July 2005. According to the MOU, SASSETA will assume the quality assurance function of all training conducted in the security industry (Pillay, 2007). Thus it is envisaged that the Training of Security Officers Regulations of 1992 will become obsolete and be replaced with the minimum training requirements for security service providers, an outcomes-based system built on unit standards and qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and with quality assured by SASSETA (Pillay, 2007)[1].

Currently, according to the BLS (2009), prospective security employees are expected to have good character references, good health and no police record. Security officers who frequently work with the public should be able to communicate well, be mentally alert and emotionally stable (BLS, 2009). Security officers should have razor-sharp observation skills and excellent verbal and writing abilities to document suspicious behaviour. Security officers also need to be physically fit and have quick reflexes because they may be called upon to detain individuals until law enforcement individuals arrive (BLS, 2009).

The focal point of training courses is on loss-prevention skills, which include access and loss control, fire-prevention and alarm systems, the identification of equipment and crime control, as well as maintenance skills (Singh, 2008). Maintenance skills include training in legal powers, self-defence, first aid, emergency procedures, safety, report-writing, record-keeping, communication, public relations and junior leadership (Singh, 2008). It is believed that training helps in the formation of a competent security officer who will be knowledgeable about strategies and techniques for controlling, maintaining and preventing crime and loss of property (Singh, 2008).

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[1] This was also confirmed by T.Scallan (personal communication, June 10, 2009), charmain of the Training Security Industry.

1.1.3.4 Employment

It is predicted that employment of security officers will grow by 17% between 2006 and 2016, which is considerably faster than the average for all occupations (BLS, 2009). The increase in crime, vandalism and terrorism increases the demand for the services of the private security industry and protection by security officers. A problem facing the private security industry is that some aspiring thieves see opportunities in working in the security industry. Zielinski (2000) reported that some aspiring thieves seek work in the private security industry as security officers in order to gain access to ATM machines, bank vaults and victims. William Brill (cited in Zielinski, 2000) explained that in many interviews conducted with convicted murderers and rapists it was found that many had worked for security companies at one point or another. Reasons supplied were that it was relatively easy to be employed as a security officer and that they were put directly in touch with potential targets. Indications that private security officers are involved in committing crime have also been noted by Potgieter et al. (2008) and Zinn (2008). Individuals who have been hired to provide personal safety and protection of assets are often vulnerable to crime syndicates (Potgieter et al., 2008). This emphasises the importance of conducting a thorough selection process in the private security industry. Singh (2008) elaborates that psychometric testing forms an essential part of the recruitment process of most middle- to large-sized security companies. She goes on to explain that psychometric testing and aptitude testing form the basis of differentiating among individuals according to a set norm. Thus, it seems that the larger security companies have an adequate recruitment process involving psychometrics.

The section above highlighted the possible reasons for crime, crime statistics, crime prevention and how the private security industry can help in the fight against crime. The training and development requirements of security officers were briefly discussed and the dangers of not having adequate recruitment and selection processes were considered. This consequence of inadequate selection procedures were highlighted in the reports on the threat of "*aspiring thieves*" and how they could infiltrate the security industry to gain access to

vulnerable victims. In conclusion, it seems important to note that while larger companies have the capital and the infrastructure to acquire the necessary psychometric tools and selection procedures, smaller companies may not have adequate resources. Smaller companies may therefore be at higher risk of employing potential criminals.

1.2 MY EVOLVING INTEREST IN THE STUDY

I started my journey in fulfilling the last part of my dream of becoming an industrial and organisational psychologist in 2007 by applying to universities to be accepted into their master's programme. Up until then I could work in the field but I wanted to be independent and not have to rely on another psychologist in a supervisory role.

While I was applying to different universities to complete my master's degree, one of the prerequisites was to write a proposal for a topic which I would research in the quest to attain this degree. I thought for a long time about what topic would interest me enough to complete the research and be proud of what I had researched.

My father is the owner of a security company that I worked for during my honours degree studies. The security company's main focus is on the protection and safeguarding of property and persons in general, which is one of three categories of security services distinguished by Pillay and Claase-Schutte (2004).

One of the main problems that the company was experiencing was that even though security officer candidates supplied the company with PSIRA certificates (certifying that they had completed basic training and adhered to the minimum requirements PSIRA demanded), many of them did not seem competent after having been employed. Their lack of competence was rumoured to be due to "buying" their qualification or to lack of proper training.

Because I studied Business Commerce and majored in industrial and organisational psychology, I was drawn to making a difference in the field that would contribute not only to the scientific environment I practised in, but also to the business world. I started getting excited about the characteristics of good security officers and the traits, skills and knowledge requirements that are critical to ensure a trustworthy and effective security officer.

The problem grew on my conscience, and even though people and lecturers tried to persuade me to choose another topic, I could not convince myself to choose a different one, even though I tried! My first idea was to establish an assessment centre for security officers. After a literature search, I discovered that there seemed to be little literature on the competency requirements for security officers that could be used for selection purposes. O*NET listed a few general competencies for security officers, but these were very generic. I could not establish an assessment centre if I did not know and understand the basic competencies needed to work as a security officer.

This brought me to the beginning of my research; my first aim was to design a competency model for selection purposes of a security officer. In future research, I hope to build on this study and design and establish an assessment centre for the selection of security officers.

The next problem I was faced with was the process I needed to follow in conducting my research project. I started with a quantitative approach because I was trained more extensively in the quantitative method. Yet, I could not reconcile my epistemological beliefs with the requirements for answering the research question in a quantitative way. There was not much literature knowledge on the competencies of a security officer, employed to protect and safeguard property and people, which could be used for selection purposes. Considering the abovementioned dilemma, qualitative research is better suited when researching new ground and their results may yield new insights into a topic based on people's natural experiences (Babbie, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Therefore, because I needed to investigate and understand the topic of study, I believed that a

quantitative approach would hamper my pursuit of knowledge and understanding. I however never realised how difficult a qualitative approach could become. It was not so much the data gathering and analysis process, but rather developing a methodological and epistemological understanding of my philosophy of science and motivating my choice of a qualitative approach.

My research journey consequently began with wanting to design a competency model for selection purposes in the protection and safeguarding of property or persons in general. This research focuses on the general workforce. My definition of the "workforce" therefore excludes managers and supervisors, which I believe would require a different competency model (refer to chapter 3; Cooper, 2000; Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Saunders, 2002).

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Considering the crime statistics of South Africa in the section above, it is clear that crime is rife in our country. In the analyses of the reasons underlying high crime indexes in South Africa, (Gilling, 1997; Minnaar, 2005; Newham, 2006; Potgieter et al., 2008; Schönteich & Louw, 2001; Singh, 2008) the focus clearly shifts to prevention of these crimes. The private security industry has become a key performer in helping to deter and prevent crime and criminal activities (Potgieter et al., 2008; Singh, 2008; Steenkamp & Potgieter, 2004). The rapid growth in the private security industry is linked to the withdrawal of the state from some policing functions, the extensive growth in private property and the inability of the police to protect private citizens (Minnaar & Ngoveni, 2004; Schönteich, 1999).

Consequently training and education of security officers have come under scrutiny in the security industry. Yet, although quality assurance is being established through outcomes-based training aligned with NQF unit standards and qualifications (Pillay, 2007), there are no set criteria for selecting security officers against the backdrop of the high crime rates and a growing private

security sector. Moreover, although middle to large-sized security companies use psychometric and aptitude testing in the selection process, smaller sized companies lack adequate resources (capital and human) to operationalise selection criteria in their recruitment and selection practices, and run the risk of hiring criminals. As such the need for selection criteria of security officers is paramount to not only public safety but also the competitive advantage of security companies.

1.4   AIM OF THE STUDY

In the light of the above, the general aim of the research study is to design a competency model for security officers for selection purposes in the safekeeping and protection of persons and property in the Thaba Tshwane area. Specific aim included herein, are:

- To explore the competencies of a competent and effective security officer and those of an ineffective security officer
- To describe and conceptualise the competencies of a competent security officer.

1.5   ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTIONS

Even though Minnaar (2005, p. 93) reported that there is "…an oversupply of lower end security officers and working conditions are poor with low pay …" it remains extremely important for security companies to have sufficient information concerning applicants' potential competence in performing security-related duties, prior to employment. The enormity of the task begins to unfold when one considers that these security officers are placed in a position to protect another individual's life and property, and even though the client's needs enjoy priority, the life of the security officer must also be protected.

This study focused on designing a competency model for selection purposes of security officers working at safeguarding property and persons in the Thaba Tshwane area. Frequently decisions made to recruit employees for a certain position are based on the recruitment officer's intuition or "feel" that a candidate "has what it takes" or on the candidate's past experience (Grigoryev, 2006, p.17) [2]. It is imperative that the selection of security officers is not based on a recruitment officer's "intuition" or the "feel" of the candidate but on scientific evidence.

Firstly, this study may contribute to broadening the theoretical knowledge base of competencies required of a successful security officer. Secondly, from a methodological perspective the benefits of a tailored approach to a competency design in a medium sized security firm will be evident through the research.

Contributions relating to practice may furthermore include the following: firstly, by using competency-based assessment the study will provide a more reliable method of selecting appropriate candidates and excluding potentially poor performers, thus keeping "*aspiring thieves*" out of the private security arena. Secondly, the study will contribute in practice to a more cost-effective way of selecting security officers by using the competencies highlighted in the competency model. Thirdly, a more reliable and cost-effective approach to selection will enhance the competitive advantage in this particular firm (Lawler, 1994) as well as sustainability, thus keeping them in business over the long term (Godbout, 2000). Fourthly, this study also attempts to contribute to improving the general image of security officers and the private security industry by helping the smaller security companies to select competent security officers. Fifthly, in assisting this company to attain a more reliable and cost-effective approach to selection of security officers, the security

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[2] This phenomenon of intuitive selection was also evident from the data in this study: "*is krities belangrik by die keuring van sekuriteitsmense, met ander woorde jy't nie 'n ticklist nie moenie op 'n ticklist werk nie want dit is, jy moet die man gaan hand uitsoek*" (it is critical in the selection of security people not to work on a checklist, the man must be hand-picked.)

company's selection procedures are aligned with the South African labour legislation by using a competency-based approach to assessment and therefore may enhance the use of selection methods that are culturally fair, practical and relevant to the job (Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002).

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

In expressing a knowledge claim Creswell (2003) believes a researcher starts a research project with certain assumptions concerning how one will learn and what one will learn during an inquiry. These claims have been called paradigms, philosophical assumptions, epistemologies and ontologies, or even broadly conceived as research methodologies. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000) a paradigm includes four concepts: ethics (how will I be moral in the world), epistemology (how do I know the world, which includes the relationship between the inquirer and the known), ontology, which addresses questions about the nature of reality and human beings in the world and lastly methodology, which centres on the best way of gaining knowledge about the world.

Johnson and Duberley (2000) state that for a novice researcher, like myself, writing about philosophical discourse can be daunting. Thus I needed to do an in-depth study concerning the knowledge claims I wanted to make. This could not happen if I did not review the literature concerning philosophy of science and also the strategies of inquiry. I therefore dedicated chapter 2 to an attempt to express how I decided to do a qualitative study with an interpretive approach, using grounded theory as my strategy of inquiry. In chapter 2 I first consider the different stances regarding philosophies of science. I explicate the purpose of the study and consider the type of research and thereafter focus on grounded theory as the specific strategy of inquiry for this study.

The research methodology applied in this research entails a detailed discussion of the participants, the research setting, data-gathering techniques

and data-analysis methods. I would like to present the research methodology in a manner that will reflect a natural and chronological account of the research process. The next section therefore contains a detailed explication of the various aspects of the applied methodology structured according to how these were applied chronologically during the different stages of my research journey.

1.7   MY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH JOURNEY

A natural account of the chronological research process follows, including demarcation of the research context, gaining access to the field, identifying research participants, data collection, sampling the data, and applying grounded theory data analysis.

1.7.1   Demarcation of the research context

The company that I based my research on has been functioning in the security industry for about 20 years, even though the security guarding services have been functioning for only the past five years from 2004. It is a small to medium company, which works with an average of 40 to 80 guards at a given time, depending on the security contracts of clients. The employment contracts of the security officers are based on the availability of clients. This company functions under the laws stipulated by legislation provided by PSIRA. This means that PSIRA can at any time pay the company a visit and examine the guards' remuneration, leave, hours worked and pension fund contributions.

1.7.2 Gaining access to the field

1.7.2.1 Getting authorisation from the managing director

I believe gaining access to the field was made a lot simpler in that I was going to conduct the research in my parents' company. From the conception of the idea of doing this particular research, my parents had to listen to my ideas constantly. Gaining access to the field or the security officers working for my parents' company was thus no problem, because my father saw and understood the positive impact my research could have on the company.

1.7.2.2 Identifying research participants

When exploring and describing how different groups of individuals behave as individuals, the unit of analysis is the individual. The unit of analysis is the what or the who being studied (Babbie, 2005) and in this study therefore constitutes the individual. In view of the nature of the study in exploring the competencies of security officers, a purposeful sampling approach was adopted. During purposeful sampling participants are selected with the objective of maximising variation of meaning (Morse, 2007). Participants are therefore selected on the basis of being information-rich with regard to the phenomenon being studied (Morse, 2007). As such, using the research question as a basis for selecting participants leads to purposefully sampling information-rich participants (refer to Morse, 2007).

Purposeful sampling in this study was guided by the research question, probing the competencies of efficient versus inefficient security officers. Thus, in identifying who would be chosen to participate in the research study, all the names of the security officers employed by the company were drawn. The best security officers were selected by the manager and supervisors and a list of names was supplied to me.

Triangulation as a method of enhancing the credibility of findings was applied, as security officers, managers, a client working in the security industry were interviewed and the disciplinary records of the security company were examined. Sampling was further guided by the principle of theory building; by using subject-matter experts (SMEs –i.e. security officers, managers, client) the different perspectives and data were collected until the same themes recurred and thus became saturated and no new themes emerged (Dey, 2007; Glaser, 2001; LaRossa, 2005; Morse, 2007).

1.7.2.3 Getting the participants' consent

While it was easier to gain access to the company on which I was conducting my research project, it was not so easy to get the participants' consent for an interview. This was a challenge resulting from my association with the company's owners. Even though I explained in detail what the research was about and all the ethical requirements for research, including anonymity and confidentiality, three security officers were unwilling to participate in the research project. I educated the participants on their right to anonymity, confidentiality and the right to voluntary participation. Although difficult, I accepted that some did not want to participate in the research and interviewed the remaining five security officers. There were no other incidents in connection with obtaining consent from the remaining participants in the research.

1.7.3 Data collection

Grounded theory usually uses the interview method for data collecting (Charmaz, 2000). In this regard Lucia & Lepsinger (1999) recommend data collection to begin with one-on-one interviews to elicit competencies.

Focus groups are another information-gathering tool, but Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) warn against the trade-off when using a focus group, for instance

quality of data may be compromised by a "group think" mentality, fewer opportunities exist for exploring further detail and participants will be less likely to be frank. Therefore, the interview rather than focus groups was used in this study and participants with different perspectives (employee, managers, client and expert) to the subject matter participated. To further achieve triangulation and enhance the trustworthiness of the study, performance evaluation documents in the form of disciplinary records were combined with the interviews conducted (Saunders, 2002).

1.7.3.1   The interviews

Stern (2007) reiterates that data collection needs to be representative and does not have to involve large amounts of data. Cooper (2000) also advises researchers to conduct a small number of interviews, still keeping in mind that enough data must be collected to be reliable, but not to go overboard. Interviews were conducted until no new or fresh data, which would have added to the study, were gained and thus saturation had occurred (Hood, 2007). My first interview was with a client of the security industry. Then I interviewed five security officers from the company, whereafter I also interviewed two managers of the company.

After considering the different interviewing techniques in qualitative research, I decided to

- conduct open-ended structured interviews with the security officers, using the repertory grid technique (RGT) to structure the interviews,
- utilise the performance behaviour document (disciplinary hearings), and
- conduct open-ended behavioural event interviews (BEI) with management and the client.

(a)   The repertory grid technique

The open-ended structured interviews with the security officers were structured with the objective to extract competencies needed to be the best security officer protecting and safeguarding people and property. The RGT could be viewed as a form of structured interview designed to make those constructs with which individuals organise their world more visible (Fransella & Bannister, 1977; Fransella, Bell, & Bannister, 2004; Gammack & Stephens, 1994; Trochim, 2001). It aims to describe the way in which individuals give meaning to their experiences in their own terms. The way in which individuals get to know and interpret their surroundings and obtain understanding of themselves and others, is guided by an implicit theory, which is the result of conclusions drawn from the individuals' experiences.

The RGT was developed by Kelly in 1955 in connection with his personal construct theory. Every individual creates and recreates an unspoken theoretical framework by which he or she lives (Fransella et al., 2004). The RGT uses the characteristic behaviours or attitudes of a specific job. The method entails using SMEs on a particular job, in this case security officers. The security officers were given eight numbers and were requested to supply a list of eight other security officers they knew well and who were currently working as security officers. These individual's names were written down on separate cards to represent each individual. I asked the security officers I interviewed "what their perception was of a good security guard" and "why they thought the people they named were good security guards." I selected three cards randomly and asked the SME to explain how two of the individuals are alike and different in some way from the third. In following a more structured approach in the interview, I allowed participants to elaborate yet I facilitated the progress of each discussion in line with the research question (LaRossa, 2005; Morse, 2007). A second set of three cards was drawn and the process was repeated until all possible combinations had been used and no new discriminating dimensions emerged.

(b)   Performance evaluation documents (disciplinary hearings)

Performance evaluation documents include written warnings in the company's disciplinary process (Saunders, 2002). The previous year's written warnings (from May 2007 to July 2009) were explored and investigated for themes. Even though the final competency model should contain positive definitions of the competencies, Cooper (2000) suggests that it can be useful to investigate competencies from a negative point of view by considering employee dysfunctions. These negative behaviours or characteristics could be converted to positive traits that could be useful in compiling a competency model for selection purposes (Cooper, 2000).

The company's disciplinary records were examined from May 2007 until July 2009. In this period of two years and two months, disciplinary action was taken against 25 employees. These were all male employees ranging from 30 to 40 years of age. Each employee had a few warnings and grievance procedures against him.

(c)   The behavioural event interview

McClelland and his colleagues developed the BEI from the Flanagan incident method (Chell, 1998). A key difference was that the technique involved the identification of less tangible aspects of behaviour, specifically soft skills and competencies (Chell, 1998). The BEI was designed as the most flexible way to discover differences between two types of job incumbents: outstanding job incumbents and less outstanding job incumbents, referred to as "typical" (McClelland, 1998). My first plan was to use only the RGT when interviewing the participants in this research. I soon realised, when I started interviewing management and client participants, that an RGT would not elicit the desired outcome. The RGT is based on the premise that the interviewee knows people in the same job and will be able to elaborate on their behaviour. Working with management and a client, I quickly realised that they had their own perceptions of an efficient and inefficient guard (their ideal job

incumbent). Whereas the RGT is person-specific, the BEI requires knowledge of the behaviour of efficient or inefficient security officers.

Two basic questions were asked while interviewing the management and client participant. The first question was what their perception of a good or efficient guard was and the second what they believed an inefficient guard was like. Answers given by management and the client were explored by using my micro-skills and asking them continually what they meant by statements they made. Since the client and the managers did not know the security guards personally, I asked them what they perceived as an efficient security guard, and what their perception was of an inefficient security guard. Another question I asked was, "What do you want or expect from a security guard?" The interviews that were conducted and the disciplinary records were integrated to form themes for designing a competency model.

1.7.3.2 Collecting and managing the data

I did not conduct all the interviews on the same day. All the security officers were interviewed on the same day and the other participants on separate occasions. In a sense it made it easier and not so tedious to transcribe, knowing that I did not have to transcribe all the interviews at once. Some interviews only lasted for 20 minutes; others were lengthier. I used micro-skills for example by probing extensively, questioning meanings (Gammack & Stephens, 1994), asking the participants to elaborate and confirming with them what I had heard and understood in the interview sessions. The interviews were conducted over a period from April 2009 to July 2009.

1.7.3.3 Terminating data collection

When does sampling stop? The literature states that this is when saturation is reached, but how do I know when the stage of saturation occurs?

Sampling may be terminated when researchers understands what they see, can identify it in many forms, and it appears consistent (Morse, 2007). My understanding of saturation is that if no new evidence comes to light when continuing the interviews and the same themes consistently recur, the category is saturated. Dey (2007) explains that saturation occurs when adding further to the data makes no difference. LaRossa (2005) concurs with Dey (2007) and reiterates that in grounded theory method (GTM) terms when no new insights about the concept occur, the concept is theoretically saturated, and is essentially a well grounded concept. Glaser (2001) warns that saturation can never really and truly occur in the full sense of the word, but for the purposes of the study saturation seemed evident after analysis of the interviews and documentation discussed above.

1.7.3.4 Recording and storing the data

All the interviews were audio-taped. I used a digital tape recorder and transcribed the interviews with relative ease. This was done because I could focus on conducting the interview without dividing my attention between writing and listening to the participant. Another reason for audio-taping the interviews were that I could refer back to the interviews with the participants and recall their feelings and language usage without consulting the participants again (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004).

 The consent forms, transcriptions and audio-recording of the research study will be kept for a five-year period.

1.7.4 Data analysis

To eradicate bias or any favouritism concerning manager, client or employee interviews, the raw data of the different interviews were analysed together for coding purposes and were never separated. A systematic grounded theory approach was applied in analysing the data according to the stages of open

coding, axial coding, selective coding and writing the emerging theory. While there are authors who warn against a literature study before gathering information, Dick (2007) explains that it could be difficult to know what literature is important if an initial literature review is not conducted. I was venturing into new territories; my first literature review comprised existing definitions of competence and competencies and what my definition of competence and competencies would be for this particular study. Urquhart (2007) refers to the initial literature review as an orienting process. She elaborates on the first literature review being regarded as a broad research problem and organising broad categories of research around the problem. After I had gathered the raw data and started analysing it, I continued with my literature review. I was looking for literature that would substantiate and extend my research findings on competencies (Urquhart, 2007). Dick (2007) also elaborates that literature review done after data analysis can be treated as data to test or refine the emergent theory. Another important element in the way I conducted my research was that all data were not treated as equal. Morse (2007) explains that some of the data obtained will be useful and other parts of the data will be "useless" and thus the researcher samples from the data, selecting and sorting, prioritising or back-staging as the researcher develops an own analysis (Morse, 2007).

1.7.4.1 Open coding

Open coding starts with the process of naming or categorising phenomena through close examination of the data (Calloway & Knapp, 1995; Locke, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). During the open coding phase the data are broken down into smaller parts, examined, and compared for similarities and differences and each part of the incident, idea, or event is given a name by which the phenomena can be identified (Calloway & Knapp, 1995; Goulding, 2005; Locke, 2001). By labelling the phenomena I describe and conceptualise a particular event (LaRossa, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain that the conceptual name or label assigned should be

suggested by the context in which the event is located (Goulding, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

By grouping concepts that seem to relate to the same phenomena, I started the process of categorising (LaRossa, 2005; Strauss, 1987). While conducting the labelling process I took each concept and decided what class of phenomenon it seemed to relate to and whether there were differences between this concept and the previous concepts. In grouping concepts I followed Strauss & Corbin's (1990) guideline that some categories will refer to conditions pertaining to the events and others categories will represent action strategies used to manage, handle or respond to the event. Still more categories will refer to the consequences of action or interaction related to the event (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Open coding can be accomplished in different ways, including examining the data sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph, analysing a whole document for themes or line by line (LaRossa, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I approached the process of open coding by analysing the first interview through a line-by-line analysis, which comprised examining the data phrase by phrase. This approach helped me in deciding what to focus on in the following interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

1.7.4.2 Axial coding

The data were taken apart through open coding and thereafter put back together in new ways by connecting categories. Axial coding focuses on specifying a category in relation to the condition that gave rise to the event, the context in which it was set, the action strategies according to which it was handled, managed and carried out and the consequences of these strategies (Goulding, 2005; Jones & Noble, 2007; LaRossa, 2005; Spiggle, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Subcategories answer questions about the phenomenon (category) such as when, why, who, how and with what consequences, giving the concept better explanatory power (Strauss &

Corbin, 1998). "An analyst is coding for explanations and to gain understanding of phenomena and not for terms such as conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 129).

1.7.4.3 Selective coding

"Selective coding is the process of integrating and refining categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). All categories must be defined in terms of their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this phase a core category is identified and systematically related to the other categories and becomes the basis of pulling all the concepts together in order to offer an explanation of the phenomenon (Bester, 2007; Goulding, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Jones and Noble (2007, p. 90) believe that the Straussian concept of a core category "refers to the main theme or story line (for instance, 'trajectory') that underlies a pre-determined research topic (for instance, 'pain management')". Thus the nine competencies were aligned with being an efficient security officer working in the area of protecting and safeguarding people and property. Refer to chapter 4 for the themes and the final competency model.

1.7.5 Assuring quality and ethical research

The purpose of the study was to design a competency model for the selection of security officers in the Thaba Tshwane area who are involved in the protection and safekeeping of persons and property. From an ethical point of view, the participants were briefed (as suggested by Christians, 2000) on the subject of the research study and a consent form was completed by each participant. The consent form stated the reason for the study and emphasised freedom of participation, confidentiality and anonymity. These aspects were also confirmed with participants at the start of each interview. Hence there was no need for deception (Christians, 2000; Neuman, 2006) in this study.

Triangulation was achieved by collecting material in as many ways as possible and from different sources (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). While exploring the competencies needed for a competent security officer, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants representing different SMEs' perspectives in the security industry. The differentiation was achieved by including security guards, a client and managers of the security officers (SMEs). The company's disciplinary records were analysed as data source (even though they reflect negative characteristics or behaviours). Saunders (2002) refers to these documents as performance evaluation documents.

To enhance the final quality of the study, all the interviews were audio-taped, using a digital recorder, in addition to extensive note-taking through which the researcher could increase the accuracy and completeness of documentation (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). I then transcribed the interviews, thus enhancing the extent to which I immersed myself in the data. As noted previously, the consent forms, transcriptions and audio-recording of the research study will be kept for a five-year period.

1.8   STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 of this study focus on contextualising the study and explicating the research design and methodology.

Chapter 2 contains an explanation of my qualitative research design.

In **chapter 3** a literature review is conducted, examining competencies which are building blocks of overall competence and thereafter competency models are examined.

Chapter 4 is an article, which includes the findings and discussions of this study. The study is concluded with **chapter 5,** in which the limitations, recommendations and the overview of the study are explained.

1.9   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the context and motivation for the study was introduced and linked with the relevancy of designing a competency model. A general overview of the literature concerning the security industry was carried out. The aim of the study was stated and the qualitative methodology of the research was examined. In the next chapter the research design will be presented.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN

In Chapter 1 I explained my evolving interest in the subject matter. Even though I was trained in qualitative and quantitative research, the focus was primarily on quantitative research. As a novice researcher I knew the primary characteristics of qualitative research and its methodology. I therefore had the responsibility to explicate my philosophy of science. I remembered something from my studies concerning the subject, but not much. Thus I started reading and examining the literature concerning philosophy of science. I was lost and confused. I would study a positivistic stance and would 'side' with them, thereafter I would study an interpretivist stance and would definitely be siding with an interpretivist viewpoint. I knew I didn't dare give up; I extensively examined the different philosophies of science to explain why my study would be qualitative in nature. The next challenging subject was strategies of inquiry in qualitative research. The examining and understanding of the research design needed to be employed for this study were daunting, yet I have grown as a researcher with leaps and bounds, and I am very grateful that I can now share my research design journey. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to my research design.

The chapter begins with examining the different philosophies of science. Thereafter the purpose of the research and the type of research are explicated, after which the focus turns to grounded theory as the specific strategy of inquiry for this study.

2.1 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Neuman (2006) and Bester (2007) believe there are three main philosophies of science in research, namely the positivist, interpretivist (constructivism is

sometimes included) and critical theory. Johnson and Duberley (2000) also elaborate on the fact that even though a more critical position with regard to approaching research is being taken, the style of writing and language usage in writing about philosophical discourse can be daunting and inaccessible to new researchers (like me).

Nel (2007) reiterates that the participants for the study (ontology) must first be identified before information (knowledge) can be gathered from the participants (epistemological). Thus, in explaining my philosophy of science in the following sections, I focus on ontological and epistemological assumptions after which I explicate my own paradigm.

2.1.1 Ontological dimension

What we perceive as the 'truth' involves ontological assumptions about the nature of the world (Bhaskar in Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Thus, ontology focuses on what there is and what I can know as researcher (refer to Nel, 2007). Therefore, Nel (2007) believes ontology involves finding participants that have experience in the subject to be studied. According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 22) the fundamental point in ontology is the question of "whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality to external social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and social actions of social actors". Taking this into account the section below will consider ontology from a positivist, constructionist and an interpretive view.

2.1.1.1 Positivist

In Bryman and Bell's (2007) view objectivism is an ontological position where a social occurrence confronts an individual as external facts that are beyond the individual's reach or influence. Thus social occurrences or observable facts and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social

actors (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). The aim of the positivist approach is to explain how the world works and issues are brought together for prediction and control (Locke, 2001). Positivists assume a realist ontology, according to which an objective world exists as a knowable observable reality and where the facts of and laws governing that world are given and are independent of those who might observe it (Locke, 2001). This objective world is primarily investigated through a hypothetico-deductive method in which prior theory plays an important role (Bryman, 1988).

2.1.1.2 Constructionist

Constructionism refers to the claim that social experiences or facts or events and their meanings are constantly being achieved by social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Thus "social phenomena and categories are not only produced by social interaction but they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 23). Constructionism challenges objectivism in terms of social actors (e.g., employees) as external realities having no role in fashioning meaning (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Thus, the constructionist approach argues for a basic rejection of the concept that science can be viewed objectively or value-free (Locke, 2001). Constructionists believe that the assumptions underlying scientific activity and the research scientists engage in are always determined by the wider culture, values, politics and historical period in which they are rooted (Locke, 2001).

2.1.1.3 Interpretivist

The interpretive paradigm's foundation rests on the interest in "understanding the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Locke, 2001, p. 8). In the interpretive paradigm social reality is not a given, but is built up over a period of time through shared history, experience and communication (Locke, 2001). Thus, what is taken for 'reality' is the combination of what is shared and taken for granted as to the way the world is to be perceived and understood (Locke, 2001). Interpretive social research,

according to Locke (2001), focuses on what events and objects mean to people, how they perceive what happens to them and around them and how they adapt their behaviour accordingly (see also Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The interpretive approach also assumes that meaning is not standardised from place to place and accordingly accepts that values and views may differ across group and social settings (Locke, 2001). Interpretivists also believe that in order to understand the world, the researcher must engage in and participate in the world and then actively interpret it (Locke, 2001). The aim of interpretivistic researchers is to make responsible interpretations and also to provide a solid basis for their interpretations (Locke, 2001). Hatch (1997) suggests that the interpretive view expresses itself in two ways: firstly, by recognising the composition of the nature of language so that by using the concept of organisations people actively create it as a fact; and secondly, by stressing that what employees take as being real is subjective. Grint (in Bryman & Bell, 2007), conducting research into leadership, claims that leadership can only be understood through the meaning of the concept for those involved in this form of social action. This implies that the competencies of a security officer would also then only be understood through the meaning of what being a good security officer entails according to those SMEs involved in the security industry.

2.1.2 Epistemological dimension

Johnson and Duberley (2000) explain why I need to know what my particular epistemology is before I undertake a study. They elaborate that "how we come to ask particular questions, how we assess the relevance and value of different research methodologies, all express and vary according to our underlying epistemological commitments" (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 1).

The word epistemology stems from two Greek words, namely "epistome", which means "science" or "knowledge", and "logos", which means "knowledge, information, theory or account" (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 2). Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 2) go on to explain that epistemology "is the study of the criteria by which we can know what does and does not constitute

warranted, or scientific knowledge". Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 3) believe that "epistemology confronts a fundamental problem of circularity, in that any theory of knowledge pre-supposes knowledge of the conditions in which the knowledge takes place". They also state that the data collected and the methods employed rather than the processes of observation determine the findings and theories of science. Hatch & Yanow (2008) agree with Johnson & Duberley (2000) that deeply held assumptions are taken for granted about how we 'come to know' and may influence what we experience as being true or false, what we mean by true and false and whether we think that true and false are visible constructs. Epistemology clarifies the conditions and limits of what is understood by justifiable knowledge, whether or not participants involved recognise this as valid (Hatch & Yanow, 2008; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Thus, no one can disregard epistemological processes when conducting research.

Next I consider a few epistemological stances.

2.1.2.1 Positivist

The motto of the Enlightenment era, according to Kant (in Johnson & Duberley, 2000) was 'dare to know', which expressed hopefulness that reason would prevail over ignorance and superstition, thus allowing human reasoning to direct human affairs. The Enlightenment era philosophers believed that human knowledge of the world could be gained from two sources, namely observation and thinking (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Rationalists gave priority to gaining knowledge by thinking because they claimed that true foundations of knowledge are available to the reflective or thoughtful mind (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). In contrast the empiricists gave priority to observation because they believed that knowledge could only be established by assessing the world through our senses (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Descartes (in Johnson & Duberley, 2000) believed that individuals' ideas and objects of external reality are independent of one another and that truth lies in the mind coming into agreement with reality. Knowing that the truth has been

correctly formed in a person's mind with what exists outside the mind, is known as the Cartesian dualism between knower and known (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

(a) Comte's positivism

Comte (cited in Johnson & Duberley, 2000) proposed that the basis of scientific knowledge was only that which was positively given. Thus Comte equated the empirical world with a domain of objective facts, which were cognitively assessable through the rationality encoded into a scientific methodology derived from physics (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). In Comte's view social and natural science were limited to and united by the value-free observation and description, explanation and prediction of an external world. The aim of sciences was to inductively generate statements of universal laws which showed causal relationships between social or natural phenomena (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Comte believed that only positive social science could have access to factual and certain knowledge that could be applied to the administration and development of society's customs (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

(b) Logical positivism

"They believed that observation of the empirical world through our senses provides the foundation for knowledge. Their version of empiricism entails the claim that such observation can be neutral, value-free and objective" (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 23)

Logical positivists believe that there is a neutral point at which an observer would be able to stand back and observe the external world objectively (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). "This is called a subject-object dualism where the observations that are registered about an external social and natural world (i.e. the object) by a passive knower (i.e. the subject), are separate and independent of the processes of observation (i.e. a dualism)" (Johnson &

Duberley, 2000, p. 23). Logical positivists believe that science can be a value-free activity in that it only deals with facts and thus its outcomes are also value-free (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). The logical positivists believe that science must only concern itself with the generation of factual knowledge and since values cannot be obtained from empirical facts, science cannot produce evaluative conclusions (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Thus the non-observable, which includes the subjective or unconscious, is rejected as a metaphysical assumption and therefore beyond the realm of science (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Logical positivists argue that any statement about the world is only meaningful if it can be proven to be true or false through observation (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

(c)   Poppers's postpostivitism

Popper argued that scientific activity often emerged out of metaphysical speculation (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). He believed that an idea that arose from metaphysics or religion, which were both untestable metaphysical conceptions, might become testable and was therefore scientific (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). In his work Popper replaced logical positivism's inductive and verification principles with those of deduction and falsification, which became the hypothetico-deductive method (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Popper claimed that the empirical basis of science had nothing absolute about it and that science did not rest upon a solid foundation, and thus could never produce definite accounts of the way the world is (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Popper believed that scientists must make hypothetical statements, which lead to empirical predictions as to what should be expected if the theory holds. Thus science advances through the detection and elimination of error by the collection of evidence and then refuting or accepting the hypothesis (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Postpositivism relies on multi-method approaches as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Here discovery and verification of theories are emphasised (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Neuman (2006) and Bester (2007) group Kant and Decartes's positivism, Comte's positivism, logical positivism and Popper's postpositivism into a positivist approach. Even though positivists may disagree on what is observable and challenge one another on issues relating to the possibility of induction and verification, they agree on the concept that what warrants knowledge is that which has a connection with reality, and has been established by the scientist's neutral and passive registration of various observable inputs (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Bryman and Bell (2007) explain that in the positivistic approach the role of research is to test theories and to provide material for the development of laws. Positivists' emphasis is on the explanation of human behaviour in social sciences (Bryman & Bell, 2007). From an epistemological point of view the aim of the positivist approach is to provide accurate descriptions of the laws and mechanisms that operate in social life, by being objective and distancing oneself from reality (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004). Evidence found in research is always imperfect and fallible, but seeks to develop relevant true statements to explain the situation that is of concern or to describe the causal relationship of interest (Creswell, 2003; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991), by relying on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible, while stressing the discovery and verification of theories (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Bryman and Bell (2007) concede that it is difficult to pin positivism down because of the different number of ways in which authors use it. Some authors believe that positivism is a descriptive tool, which describes a philosophical position that can be distinguished in research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). For other authors positivism is a critical term used to describe often crude and superficial data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

2.1.2.2 Critical Theory/Postmodern View

Orlikowski & Baroudi (1991) agrees with Lyotard (cited in Johnson & Duberley, p. 54, 2000) that the "linguistic turn suggests that language is never innocent where no meaning exists; that knowledge and truth are linguistic entities constantly open to revision, and that the social bond is linguistic but is not woven with a single thread". Thus the postmodernists believe that nothing exists outside communication signs, through which people manufacture an abundance of images (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). The fundamental issue in postmodernism is the uncontrollability of meaning, which implies that the 'out there' is constructed by humans' discursive conceptions, and these concepts are continuously combined and renegotiated in the process of making sense (Parker in Johnson & Duberley, 2000). There is therefore no single discoverable true meaning, but only different interpretations (Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). In acknowledging the linguistic turn, postmodernists believe that what we perceive to be knowledge is constructed in and through language, and thus knowledge has no vantage point outside such socio-linguistic processes (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

2.1.2.3 Interpretivist

The positivist movement dismisses the metaphysical[3], yet at the same time relies on metaphysical knowledge to establish a neutral observational language (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Anti-positivism tries to re-establish human subjectivity as a legitimate domain for social sciences and thus re-establishes discontinuity between the natural and social sciences (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Laing (in Johnson & Duberley, 2000) points out that human action has an internal logic of its own, which must be understood to make it intelligible. Thus the aim of social sciences is to understand this internal logic that takes place in humans with some form of contact with how humans experience their experiences (Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Research in the social sciences must then analyse human

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[3] Metaphysical - where the role of human subjectivity assists in explaining human behaviour (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

action and lead to understanding of the experience generated inductively after the experience has taken place (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Interpretive procedures remain at a level of *posteriori* where 'thick description' describes the motivation, intentions, meanings and contexts and goes beyond the reporting of an act, which is 'thin description' (Geertz cited in Johnson & Duberley, 2000**,** p. 34). In this manner interpretive understanding is grounded in the human action after the experience (Glaser & Strauss in Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Interpretive anti-positivism shares the warranted knowledge in observation with the fundamental claims of positivism (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Interpretivism and positivism share the 'mirror metaphor', by believing that the truth and thus objective social reality can be obtained by the researcher with methodological thoroughness in acquiring knowledge that is independent from the observer and is uncontaminated by the act of observation or knowing (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

Shutz (in Bryman & Bell, 2007) elucidates to the fundamental differences between natural sciences and social sciences. Social reality has meaning for human beings and thus human action is meaningful, implying that human beings act on the basis of the meanings that they attribute to their acts and to those of others (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Hatch & Yanow, 2008). Another point Shutz (in Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 20) makes is that it is the job of the social scientist to gain access to people's "common-sense thinking" and then to interpret the individuals actions and their social world from their point of view.

The interpretive inquirer relies on firsthand accounts of participants' experience, whereas the researcher tries to describe what he sees in rich detail (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). When considering individuals' subjective experiences of the external world, an interactive or inter-subjective epistemology could be applied, and in relying on a subjective relationship between the researcher and the participant, an interpretive approach is followed (Hatch & Yanow, 2008; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004). Interpretivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and develop subjective meanings concerning their experiences (Creswell, 2003;

Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). In the interpretive tradition the interpreter objectifies what is to be interpreted and may remain external to the interpretive process (Schwandt, 2000). This researcher looks for the complexity of views rather than tapering meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2003). The aim of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation (Creswell, 2003; Hatch & Schultz, 2002). In this kind of inquiry researchers acknowledge that their own background shapes their interpretation. Hatch and Yanow (2008) concur with Geertz (cited in Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004) that interpretive analysis is to provide thick description by describing the phenomena or the occurrence which is "grounded" in that event.

2.1.3 My research paradigm

As a researcher, I definitely relate to the blurred genres[4] period where researchers have a full complement of paradigms, methods and strategies to employ in their research, by being "free" to choose from diverse ways of collecting and analysing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Locke, 2001). I believe that norms for security officers concerning competencies must be established, concurring to some extent with an objectivist (positivist) ontology. But I also believe that the only way I could obtain a holistic understanding of the competencies needed to be an efficient security officer was by interviewing SMEs on the topic of security guarding. By interviewing SMEs, for example security officers, clients of a security company and managers working for a security company, I could elicit what their subjective meaning of a good security officer entailed.

Taking Creswell (2003) and Nel's (2007) advice into consideration that certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches, I examined the

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[4] Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to the seven moments of qualitative research, the traditional period followed by the modernist phase. After the modernist phase ended, the third phase called the blurred genres started. The fourth moment or the crisis of interpretation occurred, then the fifth moment, which is the postmodern period of experimental ethnographic writing. The sixth (post-experimental) moment writers seek to connect their writings to a free society. The seventh (the future) is the one researchers are experiencing at the moment.

various ontological assumptions as well as the epistemological assumptions of the positivist, constructionist and interpretivist. Thereafter I examined the epistemological assumptions of positivist, critical theory and interpretivism. The aim of this study is to determine what competencies an efficient security officer possesses. In exploring these competencies, my underlying assumptions about knowledge creation relate closely to the interpretive paradigm. As such I believe it necessary to access participants' perspectives and experiences of efficient and inefficient security officers. In aligning myself with an interpretive paradigm, I also believe I can remain objective yet still elicit the subjective meanings grounded in the participants' experiences. The following section will focus on the purpose of the research.

2.2   PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The overall purpose of the study can be described as both exploratory and descriptive research. Exploratory studies are crucial when researching new ground and their results could yield new insights into a topic (Babbie, 2005). Even though security and prevention of crime have been studied for some time, literature examining the competencies needed to be a competent security officer seems lacking. This study therefore explored the distinguishing skills, attributes and behaviour of a security officer by analysing SMEs' understanding of efficient and inefficient security officers.

Because qualitative research not only describes what was explored, but interpreting the data is the most basic form of description, Shank (2002) explains that every descriptive act involves choice and that choice is a form of interpretation. Shank (2002) emphasises that when taking the step to interpretation, the researcher must be as up-front as possible. "Thick description", coined by Geertz (cited in Shank, 2002), is the foundation of interpretation. Thick description as I understand it is analysing and integrating data collected in the study and substantiating it with raw data as well as with scientific literature.

The study is therefore also descriptive in that the essential competencies distinguishing efficient security officers are described through interpretation and integration of the raw data. The descriptive purpose of the research was enhanced by substantiating raw data with scientific literature, supplying the study with thick description grounded in data. The descriptive goal culminates in the design and presentation of a competency model for security officers, which may be used as a theoretical tool or product of the research.

The next step in the process was to determine which strategy of inquiry was best suited for the study in the quest to design a competency model.

2.3   TYPE OF RESEARCH: QUALITATIVE STUDY

An exploratory and descriptive purpose is well suited to qualitative research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Leedy & Ormond, 2005; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). The philosophy of science for this study is based on an interpretive paradigm, and therefore is better suited to qualitative research approach (refer to Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Locke, 2001; Nel, 2007). In applying a qualitative research approach, the researcher uses a naturalistic approach to the world by locating an observer, applying a set of interpretive material practices, which consists of utilising interviews, conversations, recordings and memoranda to the self, to make sense of the meanings people bring to her (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Inductive inquiry moves from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents a degree of order among all the researched events (Babbie, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2007). In the inductive model theories are developed by analysing data obtained from research (Babbie, 2005).

The difference between qualitative and quantitative data in essence is the difference between non-numerical and numerical data (Babbie, 2005; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). The quantitative approach in the social sciences is

extremely formalised, is overtly controlled and its range is highly defined (Mouton & Marais, 1988). The qualitative approach is not as highly formalised and the scope is likely to be undefined.

Qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality, the situational restrictions that shape inquiry and the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative researchers seek answers to questions on how social experiences are created and given meaning and the processes followed; in contrast quantitative research stresses the measurement and analysis of the causal relationship between variables, not processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Leedy and Ormond (2005) pose a few relevant ideas when deciding if research will be quantitative or qualitative. Considering the nature of the research question, qualitative research will be helpful in addressing exploratory or interpretive research questions. The amount of literature available must also be taken into consideration; if the literature is weak, underdeveloped or missing, a qualitative research design can provide the researcher with enough freedom to explore specific phenomena (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). Another consideration to take into account is the extent to which a researcher is willing to interact with participants (Leedy & Ormond, 2005).

Qualitative and quantitative researchers tell the same story, just differently. Researchers following both these approaches believe that they know something about society worth telling others, by using a range of forms, media and methods to communicate their ideas and findings (Becker in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Even though it seems that qualitative and quantitative researchers are telling the same story, qualitative researchers believe they have a closer perspective through detailed interviewing and observations and they argue that quantitative researchers seldom capture their participants' perspectives because they rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The greatest strength of qualitative research lies in

the depth of understanding the technique permits. It can provide important insight into a phenomenon.

This study focused on exploring the competencies needed for an efficient security officer, integrating different perceptions and experiences of all participants in a useful competency model. In congruence with my underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions, I believe a qualitative approach will best contribute to and enhance the design of a competency model in this study's context.

The section above considered qualitative methodology as research approach. As an interpretive researcher I need to understand by exploring and describing the realities and meaning the participants attribute to reality. Therefore an inductive approach where a set of specific observations is used to discover, analyse and interpret patterns was applied. Next the focus turns to strategy of inquiry applied in the exploration, discovery, analysis and interpretation of patterns obtained from the participant's realities.

2.4 GROUNDED THEORY AS SPECIFIC STRATEGY OF INQUIRY

Symbolic interactionism has been one of the disciplines that helped to form grounded theory (Locke, 2001). The theoretical assumptions of grounded theory are moulded by symbolic interactionism when entering a research setting and any research topic to get familiar with the specific behaviour at the symbolic and interactional levels (Locke, 2001). Because of grounded theory's origin from American pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, Lowenberg (in Locke, 2001) believes that grounded theory is also appropriately located in the interpretive paradigm.

In 1967 Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss brought two main traditions into their research by combining positivism and interactionism (Babbie, 2005). Grounded theory is thus an interconnection between research processes and

outcomes (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). The theory is grounded in the views of the participants of a study by analysing patterns, themes and common categories revealed in observational data (Babbie, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Haig, 1995). Grounded theory methods comprise systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analysing data to construct middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data (Calloway & Knapp, 1995; Charmaz, 2000). Even though there are conflicting ideas about grounded theory, Charmaz (2000) believes that the strength of grounded theory lies in its methods for understanding empirical worlds. Strategies of grounded theory comprise simultaneous data collection and analysis, a two-step data-coding process, comparative methods, memorandum writing aimed at the construction of conceptual analyses, sampling to refine the researcher's emerging theoretical ideas and integration of a theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2000). The three dominant designs in grounded theory are systematic design, emerging design and constructivist design, which will be highlighted next.

2.4.1 Systematic Design

Systematic design is associated with the detailed, thorough procedures of Strauss and Corbin (Charmaz, 2000). Systematic design uses set procedures to develop theory, and rely on analysing data for specific types of categories in axial coding, then use diagrams to present the theories they have researched (Creswell in Creswell & Maietta, 2002). Charmaz (2000) explains that Strauss and Corbin's point of departure is that there is an objective external reality and their aim is unbiased data collection by using a set of technical procedures and verifying the outcomes.

Objectivist-grounded theorists believe following a systematic set of methods will guide them to discover reality and enable them to construct a provisional true, testable and ultimately verifiable theory of reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). They accept the positivistic view of an external world, which can be described, analysed, explained and predicted, and is modifiable when and if

conditions change (Charmaz, 2000), but they reject the positivist assumption that reality is "out there" and insist that truth can be interpreted and become a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory is therefore well suited to an interpretive research perspective.

Charmaz (2000) goes on to explain that even though the researcher grounded in objectivist theory remains outside the experience, these studies may present a rich description. Grounded theory attempts to combine a naturalistic approach with a positivist concern for a systematic set of procedures when doing qualitative research (Babbie, 2005). Grounded theory is an abstraction of theory, but is grounded directly or indirectly by the views of the participants in the study, to be useful in practical applications in daily life (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory encourages researchers to contribute to the knowledge of their disciplines (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Strauss and Corbin (1994) reiterate that even though a study is directed at a specific audience, the researcher will never know how far-reaching the research study will be.

Strauss and Corbin (in Babbie, 2005) mention three guidelines that have to be followed in a systematic approach to grounded theory research:

• The researcher must periodically step back and ask herself what she is seeing and do what she sees fit with the reality of the data (Babbie, 2005).

• The researcher must at all times maintain an attitude of scepticism, by regarding the data as provisional and all theoretical explanations, categories and questions about the data must be checked against the actual data and never be accepted as fact (Babbie, 2005). This also links to Lucia and Lepsinger's (1999) views on analysing raw data when compiling a competency model.

• In following the research procedures, the researcher will be helped in giving strength or credence to a study and at the same time break

through biases, which may lead her to examine at least some of her assumptions that could affect an unrealistic reading of the data (Babbie, 2005).

2.4.1.1 Procedures used in systematic grounded theory

- Grounded theory is used to generate a broad explanation, by developing or modifying a theory, explaining a process, or creating a general abstraction of the action and interaction of individuals when existing explanations are inadequate (Creswell & Maietta, 2002).

- A trait of grounded theory research is that the inquirer collects data on a continuous basis by returning to the data sources until the categories are saturated and the theory is fully developed (Creswell & Maietta, 2002).

- Open coding categories are identified by using the constant comparative approach; the raw data are compared to incidents and the incidents to categories until a category is saturated (Creswell & Maietta, 2002). After open coding the researcher progresses to axial coding, which entails a process of selecting a core category from the open coding process and placing it at the centre of the axial coding process (Creswell & Maietta, 2002). The researcher is likely then to re-analyse the data to identify several categories relating to the core category (Creswell & Maietta, 2002). The information will be gathered into a visual picture of the process. The final stage is selective coding, through which the researcher begins to develop his or her theory by interrelating the categories in the coding paradigm (Creswell & Maietta, 2002).

- A grounded theory research project frequently ends with a presentation of a theoretical model (Creswell & Maietta, 2002).

2.4.2 Emerging design

Glaser criticises Strauss's approach and claims that he is too stringent in following rules and procedures. "We do not know what we are looking for when we start…we simply cannot say prior to the collection and analysis of data what our study will look like" (Glaser, 2001, p. 176). Glaser believes that the researcher must allow the theory to emerge from the data rather than utilising specific preset categories (Creswell & Maietta, 2002). Thus, in accordance with the emergent approach, the researcher enters the field with only a broad topic of interest in mind, without prior reading or understanding of research literature in the specific area or preconceived research questions (Jones & Noble, 2007, Locke, 1996).

2.4.3 Constructivist design

The last variation on grounded theory is the constructivist design. Kathy Charmaz is more invested in the views, beliefs, values, feelings and ideologies of the individual than in gathering facts or describing behaviour (Creswell & Maietta, 2002). The constructionist stance to grounded theory is a combination of a positivistic and postmodern view through which the mutual creation of knowledge between the viewer and viewed is acknowledged and in which the researcher strives for an interpretive understanding of a participants' meaning (Charmaz, 2000).

Constructivist grounded theory does not seek truth, which is single, universal and lasting (Charmaz, 2000). Constructivist grounded theorists believe that the viewer or researcher creates the data and ensuing analysis with the viewed, thus denying that the data provides a view of reality (Charmaz, 2000). The constructivist approach to grounded theory relies on studying people in their natural settings and steers qualitative research away from positivism. Charmaz (2000) argues that grounded theory does not have to be inflexible or prescriptive, but rather that by focusing on participants' meaning it furthers interpretive understanding. She furthermore states that a grounded theory strategy can be adopted without accepting positivist assumptions. Narrowing

research questions and creating concepts and categories, and then integrating the constructed theoretical framework, portrays the thought processes and the implementation of the researcher (Charmaz, 2000). Because a researcher's analysis describes a story which she has explored, it reflects the researcher as composer and the participant's view intertwined, owing to the shaping of the data collected and the redirection as new data emerge (Charmaz, 2000).

Taking the three different designs of grounded theory into account, this study applied systematic grounded theory from an interpretive perspective to data collection and interpretation due to the more structured process which includes detailed and thorough procedures. We now take a closer look at criticism of grounded theory.

2.4.4 Criticism of grounded theory

Glaser's criticism of Strauss and Corbin's view on grounded theory is that they are forcing data and analysis through preconceptions, analytic questions, hypothesis and methodological techniques. In contrast Glaser believes that comparisons of the data are enough (Charmaz, 2000). Glaser (in Charmaz, 2000) explains a systematic approach through discovering data, coding it and using comparative methods step by step.

Criticism against grounded theory has included that researchers "clean up" subjects' statements, "unconsciously adopt value-laden metaphors, assume omniscience and bore readers" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 521). Data gathering is disputed in grounded theory; Glaser accuses Strauss and Corbin of forcing data through pre-constructed questions, categories and hypothesis, whereas Glaser's stance is that data must emerge (Charmaz, 2000; Locke, 1996). By contextualising a research project and claiming to interpret a reality from a departure point of understanding the portrayal of the experiences of both the researcher and the participant, criticism relating to validity, truth and generalisability can be quenched (Charmaz, 2000).

Grounded theory aims for analysis through *breaking*[5] the data codes and categories can be created by the researcher in defining themes from the raw data (Charmaz, 2000). Because of this concept of *breaking* of the data, critics of the grounded theory approach believe that the method separates the "experience from the experiencing subject, the meaning from the story …" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 521).

Despite these criticisms, the strengths of grounded theory methods prevail and according to Charmaz (2000) these summatively include:

- Provision of a systematic analytic approach to qualitative analysis
- Strategies that direct the researcher step by step through an analytical process
- The self-correcting nature of the data collection process
- Emphasis on comparative methods
- The fact that the grounded theory approach is an emergent process rather than the product of a single research problem logically and deductively sequenced into a study or even one logically and inductively sequenced.

Grounded theory researchers thus share with qualitative researchers the responsibility of an interpretive stance; researchers not merely report on participants' viewpoints, but acknowledge the responsibility of interpreting what was observed (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Creswell (2003) further elaborates on the two primary characteristics of grounded theory, which constitute constant comparison of data with the emerging categories and the theoretical sampling of different individuals to extend the differences and similarities of information.

In the section above we considered grounded theory as a strategy of inquiry and considered criticism against grounded theory. Examining Strauss and

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[5] Researcher's emphasis

Corbin's systematic design, the emerging design of Glaser and the constructivist design of Charmaz, the strategy of inquiry employed in this study is in accordance to Strauss and Corbin's systematic design. Even though the design of Glaser and Charmaz are also systematic in nature, Glaser and Strauss's approach is one that is much more structured including detailed and thorough procedures. Systematic grounded theory is also appropriate to an interpretive research orientation.

2.5   CONCLUSIONS

This chapter focused on the research design. Firstly, the different approaches to the philosophy of science were explicated. Thereafter the focus was directed at the purpose of the research and the type of research, which is qualitative in nature. Lastly, grounded theory as a specific strategy of inquiry was examined.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: COMPETENCIES AND COMPETENCY MODELING

"The cost of not hiring the right people is the cost of mediocrity and failure.
How much is that worth to you?"
Charlie Wonderlic, president, Wonderlic, Inc.
(Grigoryev, 2006)

3.1   INTRODUCTION

To establish a competitive advantage a company must guard against mediocrity and becoming complacent. Benchmarking is vitally important for a company to grow and succeed. A competency-based approach to assessment is increasingly used to ensure benchmarking. In this chapter the literature concerning competencies and competency design/modelling will be examined as a sound approach to assessment practice in the organisation. Firstly, I briefly consider the differences between a job-based approach and a competency-based approach to human resource (HR) practices and highlight the different elements of a competency-based assessment approach. As a competency-based assessment approach is followed in this study, the focus turns to defining competencies and competences. Defining competency and competence led to the following section of the literature study, comprising competency models that are examined by looking at the history, defining competency models, their purposes, types of competency models, lessons learnt and pitfalls to avoid. The focus lastly turns to designing a competency model.

3.2 FROM A JOB-BASED APPROACH TO A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

Traditionally job-based approaches were used to determine individual-job fit and individuals who would fit the requirements of the job was selected (see Lawler, 1994; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Owing to the changing work environment, including the nature of work, global competition, organisational change and flattening of organisational structures, organisations moved away from the focus on jobs to the focus on individuals and their competencies (Lawler, 1994; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). This development brought about the focus from a job-based approach to a competency-based approach, which includes a more fluid skills development approach where the focus falls on the individual and what his contribution to the organisation will be (see Lawler, 1994).

Differences between the traditional job-focused approaches versus a competency-focused approach are tabulated in table 1.2 below to make the differences more instantly visible (compare Lawler, 1994; Sanchez & Levine, 2009).

Table 3.1: Differences between a job-based approach and a competency-based approach

Dimension	Job-based Approach	Competency-based Approach
Focus	Focus on the job	Focus on the individual/organisation
Organisational structure	A bureaucratic approach to the organisation's hierarchy; job design and evaluation	Flatter structure
Purpose	Describe behaviour	Influence behaviour
Analysis of work	An object to be described	A role to be enacted
Organisational change	Jobs are relatively permanent	Continuously learning and developing

In discussing the competency-based approach, the advantages and disadvantages are highlighted before taking a brief glance at analysing competency and assessing competency.

3.2.1 Advantages of the competency-based approach

The competency-based approach focus is directed at the inputs of an organisation and aligning results to business goals and therefore at gaining a competitive advantage (Delamare le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Grigoryev, 2006; Lawler, 1994; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Lawler (1994) reiterates that it does not make sense if an organisation launches a particular business strategy and is unable to develop the competencies to implement it and bring it to fruition.

Therefore, a competency-based approach advances vertical integration that aligns the individual employee's behaviour with the organisation's objectives and horizontal integration by which all the components of HR management are brought together in one frame of reference and language (Brans & Hondeghem, 2005; Lawler, 1994; Leach, 2008; Page, Hood & Lodge, 2005; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). The competency-based approach has demonstrated many benefits, which include employee productivity, reduced training costs, reduced staff turnover and enhanced organisational performance, giving a competitive advantage over rivals (Robinson et al., 2007). Thus, using a competency-based approach, Carroll and McCrackin (1998) reiterate that competencies provide the foundation for an integrated approach to performance management, selection, employee development, assessment and workforce planning.

The competency-based approach to HR management moves towards defining behavioural attributes by using education, career, background and characteristic traits for a specific job while moving away from a narrow and unique requirement for an individual job in a job specification (Page et al., 2005). Brans and Hondeghem (2005) point out that from the individuals' point of view the competency-based approach repositions the focus of competencies from a narrow and unique definition of requirements to a broader definition that includes education, career, background, character traits and defining behavioural attributes for an individual in a specific job. Using a competency-based approach to assessment, McClelland (1973) explains,

involves not relying solely on intelligence but rather observing what the individual actually does to understand what performance makes the individual successful. Competencies must be measurable and predictable and must be able to be developed over time.

Rothwell and Lindholm (1999, p. 91) define a competency-based assessment as "the process of comparing individuals in a job category, occupational group, department, industry or organisation to the competency model that has been developed for the targeted group". Competency-based assessment is an approach based on identifying, defining and measuring individual differences in terms of specific work-related constructs that are relevant to successful job performance (Kurtz & Bartman, 2002). Potgieter and Van der Merwe (2002) describe competency-based assessment as a process used to determine whether an individual meets the standards of performance required for a specific job.

Another advantage of a competency-based assessment is aligning competency assessment with South African labour legislation. The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) section 8 states that tests have to be scientifically shown to be valid, must be applied fairly to all employees and may not be biased to any employee. Section 2 concerns promoting equal and fair treatment in employment by eliminating unfair discrimination. In utilising a competency-based approach to assessment, selection methods are therefore used that are culturally fair, practical and relevant to the job in accordance with South African labour legislation (Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002). Thus, competencies should be linked to meaningful real-life outcomes that describe the way individuals perform in a real-life work environment (McClelland, 1973; Paterson & Uys, 2005). Martin and Pope (2008) reiterate that in the recruitment field, competencies that have been assessed, measured and aligned to the company's goal and vision have become a crucial component in protection against claims of discrimination.

Furthermore, Carroll and McCrackin (1998) suggest that competency-based development targets can be integrated into annual performance goals and an

employee evaluation could be based on the competency-based development plan. Each employee can target two or three competencies per assessment period, focusing on appropriate development activities and establishing appropriate follow-up measures (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Montier, Alai & Kramer, 2006).

Page et al. (2005) suggest that another advantage of the competency-based approach is that it does not encompass an established set of concepts and procedures, but rather embraces a variety of different types of qualities and forms of measurement and is therefore flexible in a changing environment. Kuchinke and Han (2005) state that a competency-based approach to education and training promises definitions of operational clarity concerning skills and behaviours, its focus on desired performance outcomes and its expectation of transparency, accountability and measurement. When considering selection purposes, a competency-based approach will assist the organisation in making the transition from a specific job function to the concept of the role of an individual, which is broader and more flexible (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998). The next step is considering the disadvantages of a competency-based approach.

3.2.2 Disadvantages of competency-based approach

The first disadvantage of a competency-based approach is defining competencies in terms precise enough to be measurable (Litchenberg et al., 2007). Litchenberg et al. (2007) go on to explain that even in the field of psychology there is lack of agreement on fundamental foundational and functional core competencies regarding the applied specialities in professional psychology.

Another disadvantage would be the process of reaching an agreed-upon classification by stakeholders to describe individuals whose behaviour does not meet minimum standards of competence (Brown, 2006; Elman & Forrest, 2006; Kanaga, 2007; Sanchez & Levine, 2009).

Disadvantages of using a competency-based approach are the high costs involved when the organisation has to invest time and money to make personnel more valuable. When an organisation invests in the development of individuals, this may lead to an increase in salary structures (Brown, 2006; Lawler, 1994; Litchenberg et al., 2007). If the employee/individual is better qualified and another company 'headhunts' him, this in effect may lead to loss of revenue for the company owing to the development of an individual who leaves the company.

Kuchinke and Han (2005) name three drawbacks of competency approaches to leadership development, including the strong tendency to view defined competencies as universal and ignoring situational and personality-based differences. Competencies could be mutually exclusive or even contradictory and competency frameworks focus on past behaviour and may not anticipate future needs.

When considering the advantages and disadvantages of a competency-based approach to selection, the strongest argument against it is the cost involved in implementing it. Yet studies have shown that return on investment far outweigh the initial cost to an organisation (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Grigoryev, 2006; Spicer, 2009). The overarching advantages of a competency-based approach to selection outweigh the disadvantages because by using a competency-based approach, the competencies of an individual are constantly aligned with the company goals, thus giving the company a competitive edge for success and survival. Applying competency-based assessment also facilitates selection practices that are legally defensible in the SA context (refer EEA 55 of 1998). Another important advantage is attained when competencies are defined and a set criteria is agreed upon by all involved, in the quest for meeting minimum standards of behaviour (Kanaga, 2007; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). The next section will focus on different kinds of competency analysis.

3.2.3 Competency analysis

The top-down approach embarks on competency analysis with a pre-existing set of competency labels, such as the work profiling system. The work profiling system has a set of generic competencies according to which individuals or SMEs can determine which competencies are important for a specific job, whereas a bottom-up approach to competency generation seeks to explore the data obtained from different sources without any pre-existing competency labels (Robinson et al., 2007). Although this method is definitely more time-consuming, this approach ensures that the results obtained from the analysis are more specific to the role being analysed than the competencies derived from a top-down approach (Robinson et al., 2007). In this study a bottom-up approach to competency generation was used, where data were obtained from different sources, including interviews with security officers, managers and clients, and triangulated and substantiated by the company's disciplinary records, the NQF level requirements of security officers as well as a literature review. The next step is considering how to assess competence.

3.2.4 Assessing competence

When competence is being assessed, it is implied that subtle or even blatant incompetence will occasionally be found (Lichtenberg et al., 2007). It is important to implement systems that are adequate and effective to measure and observe competence standards. In this lies the importance of competency models, through which thorough research is conducted to determine what the appropriate competencies are for the particular job and the behaviour needed to demonstrate competence.

Rowe (1995) believes assessment of skills (i.e. competences) should be exact and thus objective. When considering recruitment and development, grading systems emerge and assessment of competencies becomes more subjective (Rowe, 1995). This emphasises the importance of defining

competencies in a language that everyone can understand and training the assessors who will be working with the recruitment process so that all the assessors understand and have the same conception of the definition in mind when assessing a candidate.

Competencies are formulated on the basis of behaviour and can thus be used to create a wide range of assessment tools when a job is thoroughly analysed and accompanied by a measurable set standard (Heinsman, de Hoogh, Koopman & van Muijen, 2007). Heinsman et al. (2007) report on the research conducted in assessment centres when too many competencies had to be rated; individuals automatically reduced the number of dimensions owing to cognitive overload in the rating process. Kolk, Born and van der Flier (2004) regard dimensions as category labels for clusters of competencies. When conducting an assessment centre, Heinsman et al. (2007) believe that each competency must have no more than three dimensions if rating and assessment are to be successful. In view of their findings concerning competencies and competency dimensions in assessment centres, Heinsman et al. (2007) advocate that the employment interview (using a structured approach) still predicts job performance.

In the section above the different aspects of job-based and competency-based approaches were examined and the competency-based approach was considered in more detail. Thus, the focus has changed from focusing on jobs to considering individuals and the competencies they bring to the job (Lawler, 1994). The main compelling reason for adopting a skills- or competency-based approach is to assist the organisation to perform better and in so doing create a competitive advantage (Lawler, 1994; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Because organisations are always seeking a competitive advantage, a competency-based approach is used in this study and will be examined. The following section will focus on defining the competencies and competence in the competency-based approach.

3.3   DEFINING COMPETENCIES AND COMPETENCE

Even though competence has sometimes been confused with competency, the general consensus is that a person needs to be competent. What constitutes competencies and how these should be viewed and interpreted is a continuing debate, which differs throughout education, training and psychology.

3.3.1   Defining competency

Klemp (in Boyatzis, 1982) defines job competency as "an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job". Underlying characteristics of a person may include motives, traits, skills, aspects of an individual self-image or social role, or knowledge he uses (Boyatzis, 1982; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999). Action or specific behaviour is the demonstration of a competency in the framework of a specific job or environment (Boyatzis, 1982).

Carroll and McCrackin (1998) explain that competencies are knowledge, capabilities, behaviour or attitudes that embody outstanding performance in a specific context.

Athey and Orth (1999, p. 216) view competency as "a set of *observable* performance dimensions, including *individual* knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as *collective* team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to *high performance*, and provide the organization with *sustainable competitive advantage"*. Competencies may include individual, team or organisational capabilities, which consist of knowledge or skills associated with a job, emerging knowledge or skills required for future success, intellectual or best practices of high performers, process capabilities that enhance organisational or business performance and new ways of thinking that could provide a distinctive advantage (Athey & Orth, 1999).

Individual competency is defined by Parry (in Cooper, 2000) as a cluster of related knowledge, skills and attitudes, which enhances performance on the job, could be measured against set standards and could be improved by training and development. Rowe (1995) describes competencies as being more real, visible and measurable and showing certain forms of behaviour.

Potgieter and Van der Merwe's (2002, p. 62) definition of competency is "the behaviour required by a job incumbent to perform and function with competence in a job, as well as the continuing development of behavioural repertoires required to establish and maintain competence in that job". They approach the definition of competency by including the following: a set of behavioural patterns that an individual has to bring to a position in order to perform his/her tasks and functions with competence and make the individual add value to the organisation. High-performance competencies set the individual apart to distinguish between superb performers and average performers (Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002). Saunders's (2002) interpretive approach to competencies involves the utilisation of competencies by an individual, how they are used to meet job demands and whether specific competencies are used. Kurz and Bartman (2002) believe that a competency is not the behaviour or performance itself but the collection of capabilities, activities, processes and responses available that enables some individuals to meet work demands more effectively than others.

The United States Office of Human Resources (2005) defines competency as *"a measurable pattern of knowledge, skill, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully".* This broad definition of competencies forms the basis for "whole-person assessment." Competencies such as interpersonal skills and teamwork can be as important as traditional knowledge, skills, and abilities (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory & Gowing, 2002).

Competency links to an individual's behaviour and job performance (Gale, 2004). McLagan (in Dubios & Rothwell, 2004, p. 18) suggest a competency is "an area of knowledge or skill that is critical for producing key outputs".

Competencies can refer to behaviour or actions or underlying abilities and characteristics or the outcome of actions (Iles, 2001). Some competencies are task-oriented by focusing on a job's tasks, roles and responsibilities, while others are worker-oriented and focus on the underlying skills and attributes required by successful performers (Kandola & Pearn, 1992). Robinson et al. (2007) have a broader view of competency; they include individual characteristics that differentiate superior performance from average performance or effective from ineffective performance. In doing this their definition considers task- and worker-oriented competencies.

Koeppen, Hartig, Klieme and Leutner (2008, p. 62) define competencies as "context-specific cognitive dispositions that are acquired and needed to successfully cope with certain situations or tasks in specific domains". Competencies reveal an individual's potential to meet cognitive demands in real-life and context-specific situations (Koeppen et al., 2008; Lichtenberg et al., 2007).

Employees cannot perform to standard without competencies, even though competencies cannot guarantee that employees will perform adequately (Cooper, 2000). Caldwell (2008) also reiterates that the possession of a set of competencies does not ensure effective or consistent performance of a role or task. Caldwell (2008) explains the folly of separating human competencies and performance from the organisation's characteristics.

Considering the abovementioned discussion on competencies, the following drew my attention. Even though the authors try to claim different perspectives on the concept of competencies, my point of view is that everybody is defining competency similarly; some just provide a more comprehensive perspective than others. My view is that competencies encompass the whole person, covert and overt competencies, all components needed to be effective in a particular job or work context. An employer may have the best competencies or a total range of competencies, but if he can't "enact" them, the competencies are worthless.

Competency is therefore defined in this research as knowledge, skills, activities, capabilities, motives, traits, attitudes or behaviour, aspects of an individual's self-image or social role and knowledge he uses in real life and context-specific situations, which are observable and can be measured against set standards.

Now that competency has been examined and defined for this study, competencies will be used as the building blocks for competence. The focus now turns to competence; the definition of competence is explained and thereafter a definition of competence for this particular study is provided.

3.3.2 Defining competence

"Competence is like death: you cannot be slightly dead, reasonably dead or totally dead; you are either alive or dead. Competence is the same"
Rowe (1995, p. 4)

Boyatzis (1982, p. 12) defines competence as the "effective performance of a job in the attainment of specific results (i.e. outcomes) required by the job through specific actions while maintaining or being consistent with policies, procedures, and conditions of the organizational environment."

Leach (2008) concurs with Brown's (1993, p. 28) stance that "qualifications are not necessarily competences". Brown (1993) affirms this by stating management education can supply knowledge about management but it is a challenge to supply knowledge on how to manage. A manager can know about management but competence comes into perspective when the manager is able to manage (the 'can do' part) (Brown, 1993). The American Management Association, in conjunction with McBer (in Brown, 1993, p. 30), has its own definition of competence, which includes *"an underlying characteristic of a manager which, if used effectively, leads to effective managerial behaviour"* in an organisational setting. It states that a manager being in possession of a needed competence does not necessarily cause

effective job performance, but suggests that the use of the competence may lead to effectiveness.

Brown (1993) elaborates on the definition of competence defined by the Management Charter Initiative:

1. Competence is the ability to perform the activities within an occupational area to the level of performance expected in employment. This embodies the ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations, and includes personal effectiveness.

2. Competence is an action, behaviour or outcome which can be demonstrated, observed and validly, reliably and objectively assessed, or the demonstrable possession of underpinning knowledge or understanding.

3. Standards, which form the prime focus of training and the basis of vocational qualifications, are based on the needs of employment, the concept of competence, the skills, knowledge and levels of performance relevant to the work activity. They must be assessable and endorsed by the relevant employment sector or profession.

Competences, in Rowe's (1995) opinion, refer to the collection of skills that are satisfactorily performed. When competence is assessed, cognisance must be taken of the fact that at the same time eligibility (whether the candidate possesses the right knowledge, qualifications), suitability (whether the candidate has the necessary skills and whether he/she is physically and mentally suitable) and ability (whether the candidate could demonstrate the required skill to set standards in the workplace) are considered and taken into account (Rowe, 1995). Rowe (1995) explains that an individual cannot be "partially competent"; he is either competent or incompetent.

Potgieter and Van der Merwe (2002, p. 61) define competence as "the skill and ability of a person to effectively perform and cope with job demands in the workplace". Their definition includes being able to perform well in different settings through the transference of skills and knowledge to new and diverse circumstances, over time within an organisation. Also included in this definition of competence is the ability of the individual to contribute to the organisational goals in a cost-effective way. Specific skills and standards referred to in Potgieter and Van der Merwe's (2002) definition of competence take into account skills or a cluster of skills needed to succeed in an organisation. Thus, competence is abstract, flexible and tends to have different meanings in different contexts. It relates to the skills and abilities of an individual to perform successfully and cope with job demands in the workplace (Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002). Similarly, Kurtz and Bartman (2002) describe competence as having mastery in relation to specified goals or outcomes.

Gale (2004, p. 1087) describes competence as "the ability to do something well or successfully". Brown (2006, p. 20) defines competence "as something an individual must demonstrate to be effective in a job, role, function, task or duty".

Weinert (in Delamare le Deist & Winterton, 2005) recorded nine different ways in which competence has been defined, namely general cognitive ability. specialised cognitive skills, a competence performance model, modified competence-performance model, objective and subjective self-concepts, motivated action tendencies, action competence, key competencies and meta-competencies. Cultures, disciplines, paradigms and countries differ when defining and interpreting competence. After researching competence, Delamare le Deist and Winterton (2005) argue for a holistic typology to understand the combination of knowledge, skills and social competences that are required in different occupations. Delamare le Deist and Winterton's (2005) typology of competence comprises a relationship between four dimensions, which include conceptual (cognitive, knowledge and understanding) and operational (functional, psycho-motor and applied skill)

competences. The competences associated more strongly with individual effectiveness are also both conceptual (meta-competence, including learning to learn) and operational (social competence, including behaviour and attitudes). In this holistic approach to competence, knowledge (as well as understanding) is captured by cognitive competence, skills are captured by functional competence and competencies (behavioural and attitudinal) are captured by social competence; meta-competence facilitates the acquisition of the other substantive competences (Delamare le Deist & Winterton, 2005).

Leach (2008) explains that being qualified is helpful but inefficient and thus an individual needs to provide evidence of competence as well as qualifications. Emphasis is placed on being competent and possessing competencies that can be demonstrated through performance, implying that an individual is not automatically competent because of prior qualifications.

The general consensus is that competence is an action, an outcome, skills and ability to be demonstrated or performed and an individual is competent or incompetent, but cannot be partially competent (Brown, 1993; Brown, 2006; Gale, 2004; Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002; Rowe, 1995).

In this particular study competence is defined as the skill, ability, suitability, eligibility and underlying characteristics of the individual used to perform a job, role, function, task or duty effectively in contributing to the organisational goals in a cost-effective way. Therefore, this study agrees with Brown (1993) and Leach (2008) that qualifications are a necessity but do not constitute competence. An individual may have qualifications but be unable to demonstrate the learnt competence in an effective way.

In concluding this section of the literature study, it is clear that competence describes what people can do and competency focuses on how they do it (Rowe, 1995). Competencies are therefore the building blocks for competence and the two cannot be separated from each other. Competencies encourage a common language that can be used by all the members of an organisation. Competence is the skill and the standard of performance

reached, a qualification to perform, while competency indicates the behaviours adopted in competent performance (Cooper, 2000; Rowe, 1995).

Competencies are thus the underlying attributes whilst competence is the product of these underlying attributes. There are different approaches to establishing what competencies are required in a specific context. The process of determining these is referred to as competency modelling and this will be discussed next. I will focus on competency models that combine competencies into a cohesive set of abilities, skills and behaviours to identify a holistic picture of competencies for a specific job.

3.4   COMPETENCY MODELS

A competency model is an integrated cluster of competencies required in the selection process and competency modelling denotes the process followed to design and develop a competency model. In this section the history of competency models is presented and the nature of competency models is clarified. Various uses and types of competency models are also highlighted**.** Lessons learnt and pitfalls to avoid will be mentioned before focusing on the development of a competency model.

3.4.1   History of competency models

In the 1960s McClelland wrote an article in the *American Psychologist* claiming that intelligence quotient (IQ) and personality tests were poor predictors of competency (Cooper, 2000). In the 1970s McClelland helped the United States Information Agency (USIA) to identify the attitudes and habits of outstanding USIA officers by asking the names of their most outstanding employees.

McClelland and his partner, Dailey, conducted extensive interviews with 50 people. In the interviews they requested employees to describe three incidents where they performed outstandingly and three incidents where the individuals felt they had failed or 'messed up'. McClelland and his partner asked very detailed questions to establish a clear picture of what was done and said, as well as when and where it happened and who else was involved (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). McClelland (1973, p.1) stated: "If you want to test who will be a good policeman, go find out what a policeman does. Follow him around, make a list of his activities, and sample from that list in screening applicants".

McClelland thus led the way in developing job-related competency models by determining what leads to superior performance and by identifying top performers and determining what they do (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Two important principles of McClelland's model are to focus on highly successful people without making any assumptions about their role and then pay attention to what they actually do (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Rowe, 1995).

3.4.2 Defining competency models

In Mansfield's (1996) opinion competency models are detailed behaviour-specific descriptions of skills and traits needed to function optimally in a job. Lucia and Lepsinger (1999, p. 5) state that a "competency model describes the particular combination of knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed to effectively perform a role in an organisation and is used as a human resource tool for selection, training and development, appraisal and succession planning". Rodriquez et al. (2002) concur with Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) that a competency model focuses on a whole-person assessment where the emphasis is on what the person can bring to the organisation. Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) believe competency models should include hereditary and acquired abilities. Hereditary requirements come into play when an individual, for example, has an aptitude for mechanical things. In their model Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) use behaviour, skills, knowledge, aptitude and personal

characteristics to complete their competency picture. Rothwell and Lindholm (1999, p. 91) provide the following definition of a competency model: "a competency model is usually a narrative description of job competencies for an identifiable group, such as a job category, a department or an occupation. It describes key characteristics that distinguish exemplary (best-in-class) performers from fully-successful performers."

Dubios and Rothwell (2004 p. 23) describe a competency model as a "written description of the competencies required for fully successful or exemplary performance in a job category, work team, department, division or organisation."

Competency models focus on defining skills, knowledge, attributes and behaviour of successful employees (Teodorescu, 2006). Teodorescu (2006) elaborates that the desired outcome of a competency model is to replicate the competencies successful employees possess in less successful employees through hiring, assessment and development programmes. In Teodorescu's (2006) view, competency model results are a list of skills, knowledge, attributes and desirable behaviour believed to be a requirement for success in a specific job.

Competency models are used to build training, hiring, evaluation and assessment programmes. Included in this is ranking competencies in order of importance and to the desired level that needs to be attained.

Competency models help differentiate between competencies that can be imparted through training and those that are more difficult to develop (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Competency models must not only define the competencies necessary for optimal performance; they must also supply examples of the behaviour needed in the performance of a particular job (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) explain that when data are collected through focus groups, interviews and similar methods, the focus must be on real and specific behaviour that can be changed or taught through training and coaching. To optimise a competency

model it must be constructed with a specific role in mind (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

A competency model is defined in this study as the successful competency identification and written description of related competencies required for successful or exemplary performance for an identifiable group, such as a job category, a department or an occupation. The aim of this study is to design a competency model that will identify and define related competencies needed to be a successful security officer.

A competency model can be used for different purposes, including training and development, performance appraisal systems, succession planning and selection. In the following section, the purposes of competency models will be explained.

3.4.3 Purposes of competency models

Competency models are used to build training, hiring, evaluation and assessment programmes. By developing a successful competency model, the organisation is able to be consistent in recruiting employees, training and measuring performance against a set standard (Durgin, 2006; Spicer, 2009). Included in this is ranking competencies in order of importance and to the desired level that needs to be attained (Teodorescu, 2006).

3.4.3.1 Training and development purposes

A competency-based training and development system has four main benefits. The first benefit is the focus on relevant behaviour and skills (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999; Spicer, 2009). Even though being good at a job is sufficient, it must also be a priority to be efficient in the job. This is the benefit derived from determining individuals' strengths and developmental areas by assessing their capabilities and determining the behaviour needed to improve their effectiveness for their specific post; the

individual becomes more active in his own developmental areas and may choose training programmes accordingly (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

Secondly, a competency model can assist human resource departments in assessing what training programmes are needed (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Spicer, 2009) to reach short-, medium- and long-term goals to optimise the effectiveness of the organisation. Thirdly, using competency models can eradicate speculation on where to focus resources by differentiating the relevance to current developmental needs or requirements for the job (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Rodriquez et al., 2002). Fourthly, a competency model can help align the manager and subordinate's vision on what kind of training and development are necessary to be successful in a particular job (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

3.4.3.2 Performance appraisal system

A competency model for performance appraisals will provide shared understanding of what will be monitored and measured, by assuring the employees the organisation is concerned not only with results but also behaviour and the ways in which results are obtained (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Spicer, 2009).Using a competency model facilitates the performance appraisal discussion and provides focus for gaining information about behaviour (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999).

3.4.3.3 Succession planning

Using a competency model clarifies the required skills, knowledge and characteristics that will contribute to successful performance of a specific job (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Rodriquez et al., 2002). Using a competency model can also reveal significant differences in the factors needed in the effective performance of a specific job (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Schippman et al., 2000; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). When subjecting a competency model to the recruitment process, we focus more strongly on the future by focusing on

the skills and behaviour we require from a new entrant (Rowe, 1995). Competency modelling thus has strategic value in selection and recruitment practices.

3.4.3.4 Selection purposes

Poor hiring decisions are made as a result of lack of training of recruiters and hiring on the basis of the "feel" of the candidate or issues concerning technical or professional competencies (Grigoryev, 2006; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999; Spicer, 2009).

Using a competency model holds many benefits for selection purposes. It provides a comprehensive picture of the job requirements (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999, Rodriquez et al., 2002; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). The competency model helps the assessor look for characteristics as well as skills and knowledge to perform the required job effectively. It increases the likelihood of selecting candidates who will succeed in the job (Grigoryev, 2006; Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Spicer, 2009). Using a competency model will reduce the investment (which includes both time and money) in individuals who may not meet the company's expectations. A competency model used for selection purposes can also aid in the candidate's assessment of his/her own readiness and can help the candidate focus on training and developmental plans to address missing competencies (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Spicer, 2009).

Many candidates are selected on the basis of their technical or professional competencies rather than the core competencies of the position (Grigoryev, 2006). Grigoryev (2006) explains that a more systematic approach to hiring prospective employees, which includes interviewing, is needed (also see Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Grigoryev (2006) elaborates on the effectiveness of the hiring process when a well-developed competency model is used and a combination of technical/professional skills and soft skills are aligned with organisational goals. Assessment and interview questions can be developed

to assess the fit between the candidate and the core competencies required for the specific job (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Grigoryev, 2006).

A competency model can be used for many purposes to enhance an organisations' effectiveness. These include training and development, a performance appraisal system, succession planning and selection. This research project will focus on designing a competency model for the selection of security officers. Now that the purposes of competency models have been determined, the focus will shift to the different types of competency models.

3.4.4 Different types of competency models

Rothwell and Lindholm (1999) reviewed the literature on competency modelling approaches and identified three major approaches to competency modelling, namely: the borrowed approach, the borrowed-and-tailored approach and also the tailored approach. In this section the different types of competency models are examined.

Firstly, the borrowed approach implies borrowing a competency model from another organisation (Cooper, 2000). This approach does not require any methodology because no investigation into competencies is undertaken. Even though using a generic competency model is less time-consuming, behaviour from a generic set of building blocks does not specify with whom and where the competency is demonstrated (Mansfield, 1996). Neither does a generic competency model distinguish between the different requirements of different jobs, which may lead to limited application for selection purposes (Mansfield, 1996). A generic competency approach also disregards technical skills and knowledge, which are crucial when matching individuals to the required job competencies (Mansfield, 1996). Delamare le Deist and Winterton (2005) examine the phenomenon that while management strategists emphasised competencies that were unique and firm-specific, human resource development (HRD) literature was more concerned with developing highly transferable generic competencies. Thompson, Stuart and Lindsay (1996)

warn against using a generic list of competencies for managers working in a small firm, because it may undermine the very things that have led to the firm's current success.

Secondly, the borrowed-and-tailored approach encompasses borrowing another organisations' competency model and tailoring or adjusting the competencies to suit the needs and culture of the new environment which is adopting it (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999). Tailoring the competencies to the new environment will be accomplished through conducting a small-scale study using behavioural event interviewing or surveying members of a targeted group (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999).

Thirdly, the tailored approach is the most useful in ensuring legal defensibility when competency models are to be applied to more than only individual development (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999). A thorough, tailored approach through research has to be implemented when competency models are used in the decision-making process concerning selection, termination of service or promotion (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999).

I concur with Thompson et al. (1996) who warn against using a generic competency model in a small to medium firm. It is imperative that a tailored approach to a competency model be used for small to medium-sized firms to perform better and enhance their competitive advantage (Lawler, 1994) and sustainability (Godbout, 2000), thus keeping them in business over the long term (Godbout, 2000). To derive the most comprehensive and best suited competency model for this study, a tailored approach will be used. The focus turns to lessons learnt from the literature and the pitfalls to avoid when designing a competency model.

3.4.5 Lessons learnt and pitfalls to avoid when designing a competency model

Before building and designing a competency model, a few lessons learnt and pitfalls that may hinder the design of the competency model must first be explained.

3.4.5.1 Lessons learnt in designing a competency model

An important aspect to keep in mind when contemplating a competency model is to be context-specific. It is imperative to know and understand the business needs of the organisation and the demands and constraints of the work environment (Cooper, 2000). The value of competency models lies in the behaviour that represent the competencies and secondly the 'buy-in' resulting from the processes used in identifying the competencies (Kanaga, 2007; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Kanaga (2007) focuses on leadership competency models, but the principles that are expressed can be used in other competency models as well. The first step is to determine and define the purpose of building a competency model and to ensure that the purpose is compatible with and integrated into the organisation's structure (Durgin, 2006; Kanaga, 2007; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Kanaga (2007) reiterates the necessity of creating specific models for specific levels. He goes on to explain that what is required of an effective first-line manager is not the same as what is required of an executive. Even though some competencies may be present at all levels, a risk of short-changing is taken when models are not created for individual jobs (Kanaga, 2007). The principle of Kanaga (2007) links with the views of Lucia and Lipsinger (1999), Cooper (2000) and Mériot (2005) on creating competency models for each job specifically.

A well-developed competency model needs balance in the sense that it is important to consider what is working in the organisation at present and to include competencies needed in the future of the organisation (Kanaga, 2007). When building a competency model, cognisance must be taken of the possibility that things might change in the organisation to be able to move in

the right direction (Kanaga, 2007; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999). Therefore, competencies must be based on rigorous research by conducting interviews, although this may be time-consuming, not only to conduct the interviews but also to analyse and interpret the data (Kanaga, 2007). It is also of importance to define and implement a sound foundation for doing revisions that will fit all the applications of the competency model (Kanaga, 2007).

When deciding on how many competencies are appropriate for a competency model, Carroll and McCrackin (1998) believe it is best to choose ten to 15 essential competencies a prospective employee needs to be successful in a specific job. According to Kanaga (2007), a good target is eight to 12 competencies in a model, which would discourage a one-size-fits-all mentality. Selecting competencies is important because the more competencies are included, the more diluted the model becomes, resulting in diminished usefulness as a tool (Kanaga, 2007). Leach (2008) advises that a set of competencies should be no more than six, because the recollection of these competencies is difficult without referring to substantiating documents.

Naming the competencies creates a common language that everybody in the organisation can understand (Leach, 2008; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). In practice Teodorescu has found many problems when competencies are not well defined and written in a language that everyone would be able to understand (Teodorescu, 2006). Lichtenberg et al. (2007) emphasise the importance of defining descriptions of the competencies within each competency domain to enable reliable and valid assessment methods to determine if an individual is competent for a specific job. This again emphasises the importance that competencies must be well defined in a general language, ensuring that everybody in the organisation can relate to them and understand them.

Spicer (2009) encourages HR professionals to build a competency model that will encourage better performance and help drive the business in the present and into the future. Spicer (2009) warns HR professionals to ensure that competencies for each job are validated. Knowledge, skills and attitudes have

depth as well as breadth and thus need a comprehensive assessment system (see Leach, 2008). All assessments must be rendered legally defensible by keeping evidence to support assessment development and ensuring that no one will be adversely affected.

3.4.5.2 Pitfalls to avoid when designing a competency model

There should be a consistent interview protocol, posing the same set of questions to all the interviewees; the only time the interviewer may deviate from it is when she is probing for more detail (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). This ensures the quality of the data, making the spread and reconciliation of the findings easier, and increases the probability that comparable material is being analysed and discussed (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

Seeing what one wants to see (personal bias and assumptions), implying subjective interpretations of the data, is unscientific and unethical (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). While conducting data collection interviewers/researchers may ask questions to obtain support for their personal hypothesis, by probing or encouraging comments that support their assumption versus those that may contradict it (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). During the data analysis phase, the researcher's bias can influence the interpretation of data, if the interviewee's comments or other raw data collected are "massaged" to fit a preconceived model of effectiveness rather than allowing a more pure development of the model (Charmaz, 2000). By supporting decisions made through specific quotations and explanations and remaining open-minded, combined with willingness to reconsider preconceived assumptions, the researcher may be able to avoid personal bias in her or his research (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

Relying solely on the incumbent's perception is another pitfall to avoid (Cooper, 2000). Even though it is crucial to get inputs from the job incumbent, self-reports and self-assessments may be flawed by individuals' perception of

what they should be doing versus that which they are actually doing (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

(a)   Brown (2006) gives guidelines on how to avoid competency blunders:

✓   The purpose of using a competency model is to identify the standards of good performance in a company. Thus the foundation of success lies with the individuals who know the job thoroughly and not the HR team who does not understand what is required.

✓   Competencies are confused with job tasks or duties. To be a successful security officer, an individual would have to develop particular competencies that underlie guarding, including vigilance, honesty, language proficiency and teamwork.

✓   Traits and abilities that are difficult to acquire or develop on the job should be a focus point in the hiring process. Integrity, resilience or flexibility are qualities that prospective employees should have.

✓   Less is usually more; the requirements of individual or organisational competencies become less clear as the number of competencies increases. Competencies should be foundational for everything else and should support the job essentials.

✓   Competencies must be developed and defined in terms of behaviour that is observable and measurable. Accurate measurement is critical when competencies are used for hiring and promoting.

Even though most competency models are based on leadership competencies, the principles used can be applied to other jobs or positions that are critical to the organisation, such as the security officers in a security firm. In the above discussion a few lessons learnt, pitfalls and blunders to

avoid while designing a competency model were explained. Now the focus shifts to developing a competency model.

3.5 DEVELOPING COMPETENCY MODELS

Brown (2006, p. 20) encourages "a healthy dose of common sense" when developing competencies. Competency models should be dynamic, flexible and easily updated without being too expensive (Brown, 2006; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). In a swiftly changing business environment, the workforce must be highly skilled, technically adept as well as able to learn quickly, adapt rapidly to change, communicate effectively and foster interpersonal relationships (Rodriguez et al., 2002). This can only be achieved when the focus is placed on a whole-person assessment by aligning what the individual can bring to the organisation with the organisational goals and strategies (Rodriguez et al., 2002; Sanchez & Levine, 2009).

Cooper (2000) suggests not focusing too much on its size at the onset of developing a competency model. The main objective is being thorough and the first task is to identify every possible competency needed for the position; nothing should be ruled out (Cooper, 2000). Yet, there are different approaches to developing competency models and a more detailed theoretical perspective of these is given here with the intent of concluding an integrated approach upon which the competency model in this study will be based.

3.5.1 Lucia and Lepsinger's (1999) approach to developing competency models

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) outline four steps when developing a competency model from the onset. They describe four steps when developing a competency model: determining a data collection methodology, collecting

data, direct observation of the incumbent and developing an interim competency model.

3.5.1.1 Step 1: Determine data collection methodology

The purpose of data collection is to understand and explore critical incidents and accounts that will reflect an effective performance model by deciding who will be interviewed, what the data collection format will be and which data-recording methods will be used in the quest to develop a competency model.

(a)   Who will be interviewed?

In an ideal world everyone in the role (*as security officer*)[6] will be included, but owing to practical considerations such as budget and time constraints, a representative sample of the population (*security officer*)[7] will be used. The quality of the interview pool is also an important consideration. The objective is to include a sample that truly represents the population (*security officer*)[8], by interviewing a mixture of people whose performance exceeds, meets or falls below performance expectations and of different age, gender and tenure of the job.

(b)   The data-collection format

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) recommend data collection to begin with one-on-one interviews, where detailed information on the daily issues and challenges facing the job incumbent are explored. Focus groups are another information-gathering tool, but Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) warn against the trade-off in using a focus group; for instance the quality of data may be compromised by a "group think" mentality, fewer opportunities exist for exploring further detail and participants will be less likely to be frank.

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[6] Researcher's inclusion.
[7] Researcher's inclusion.
[8] Researcher's inclusion.

(c)   Data-recording methods

The success of a competency model depends on the accuracy of recollecting and reflecting on the interviewee's (*security officer*)[9] point of view. The objective is to record interviewees' comments fully in their own words, to determine the "how" of performance. By using a tape recorder and taking extensive notes the researcher can increase the accuracy and completeness that are crucial in the development of a competency model.

3.5.1.2 Step 2: Collecting data

(a)   Open-ended questions

When open-ended questions are used participants are able to express their perceptions in their own words and are likely to answer fully and completely.

(b)   Stories and examples

When using open-ended questions in an interview setting, stories and examples can be helpful in eliciting behaviour, skills and attributes needed to be successful in the particular job.

(c)   Probing for specifics

By probing for specific incidents the researcher is more likely to understand specific behaviours that are important in the decision-making process to resolve situations or take advantage of other situations and these behaviours that are described can be used to identify relevant skills, knowledge or characteristics without making assumptions.

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[9] Researcher's inclusion.

3.5.1.3   Step 3: Direct observation of incumbent

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) encourage observing individuals on the job, because it offers a reality check against the information gathered during the interview. Direct observation may also assist in weeding out idealised reports and therefore create a more realistic picture of effective job behaviour.

3.5.1.4   Step 4: Develop an interim competency model

By examining the data gathered through interviews and observation of the job incumbent, the researcher can start to identify themes and patterns to elicit relevant competencies. Lucia and Lepsinger (1999, p. 80) refer to an "interim competency model", which consists of the preliminary list of skills, knowledge and characteristics needed in the position; this model will be circulated for further adjustments[10].

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) believe there is an art and science to building a competency model, even though methodological steps are implemented and the participants help with insights into their own experiences. They firmly believe that practice makes perfect in relation to on-the-job experience in developing a competency model.

(a)   Identifying themes and patterns: Individual work

The process of identifying themes and patterns involves three steps, namely separating explanations and examples offered by the interviewees that reflect specific skills, knowledge and characteristics, grouping them, and assigning names to each group. Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) encourage the novice in developing a competency model to follow two approaches.

Firstly, by starting with a general idea on repeated references to particular forms of behaviour and skills, patterns will start to emerge, and these broad

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[10] Validating the competency model.

themes can be grouped under a particular heading. Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) caution the data analyst/researcher about holding any preconceived ideas about the expected outcomes of their analysis and to remain open to discovering new and unexpected findings.

Secondly, starting with a blank slate, the researcher writes down every skill, knowledge and characteristic mentioned during the interview. Similar comments and the frequency of these comments are noted. These may be indications of behaviour that reflect skills, knowledge or characteristics. These groups are named to indicate the competency they represent and the process is further enhanced by organising the supporting quotations under the appropriate competencies.

3.5.2 Cooper's (2000) approach to developing competency models

Cooper's (2000) approach to developing a competency model has no steps or phases, but offers guidelines that include the size of the competency model, guidelines for competencies, organising competencies into hierarchies, sources of competency information and categorising competencies.

3.5.2.1 Size of the competency model

The size of the competency model depends on the purpose of the model, whether a curriculum-based, case-worker or security officer model. The size of the competency model should not be a concern during the information-gathering phase (beginning), but should rather focus on identifying every possible competency needed for the position.

3.5.2.2 Guidelines for competencies

A competency requires knowledge, attitudes and skills that affect the job; it must correlate with job performance, must be measurable against set standards and must be able to improve or develop.

3.5.2.3 Organising competencies into hierarchies

Cooper (2000) believes in outlining terminology, determining a main category and thus organising competencies hierarchically. Sometimes competencies link in multiple categories and at other times competency interrelationships manifest. The researcher determines how deeply hierarchies will be pursued and to what extent they will be interrelated.

3.5.2.4 Sources of competency information

Cooper (2000) states that the basic tool for developing competency models is the concept of processes. Processes are compiled primarily from activities that require skills and decisions that require knowledge. Questions that must continually be asked during the development of a competency model are:

1.   What does the employee have to be able to do?
2.   What does the employee have to know to do it?

3.5.2.5 Categorising competencies

(a)   By assumption

Cooper (2000) cautions against assuming inherent competencies (traits, behaviour ethics and work habits) of an individual in the working environment. When gathering information for a competency model, while developing a competency model for selection purposes, all the necessary competencies needed for the specific job must be stated. Even though the final competency model should contain positive definitions of the competencies, Cooper (2000) suggests that it can be useful to investigate competencies from a negative point of view by considering employee dysfunctions. These negative behaviours or characteristics could be converted to positive traits that can be useful in compiling a competency model for selection purposes.

The question is then asked where you draw the line in selection applications and Cooper (2000) believes this is a philosophical and systems decision of concern to the company.

(b)   By industry

Different industries have their own professional competency models. These may range from official licensing to certifications, and other industries provide certification programmes to indicate that the individual has achieved a certain level of professional expertise. It can be a useful source of information regarding ethical guidelines and professional standards in relation to competencies.

3.5.3 Saunders's (2002) approach to developing competency models

 Saunders's (2002) competency model has seven phases, namely consultation, identification of competence, development of the competency statement, identification of methods and measurement, training of assessors, implementation of competency approach, monitoring effectiveness and adapting the process where necessary.

3.5.3.1 Phase 1: Consultation

Consulting with all the stakeholders in the company to ensure smooth acceptance of the intervention is essential.

3.5.3.2 Phase 2: Identification of competence

By analysing the knowledge, skills and behavioural attributes needed for a specific job, Saunders (2002) draws the attention back to the fact that the competencies must link to the overall strategy of the company. In the identification of competence the nature of the job and the nature of the

candidate are important considerations. Saunders (2002) reminds us to ensure when identifying competencies that it is done fairly, objectively and in a manner that does not discriminate on cultural grounds or against previously disadvantaged groups. Saunders (2002) cautions against not consulting the job incumbent when gathering information; she explains that an individual doing the job can offer valuable input in the competency-gathering process. Another resource that can assist in the competency-gathering phase is performance evaluation documents.

3.5.3.3 Phase 3: Development of the competency statement

The competencies, the associated performance standards and methods of measurement should be explicitly outlined in the competency statement.

3.5.3.4 Phase 4: Identification of methods and measurement

It is important that all methods used in measurement should be valid, reliable and culturally appropriate in accordance with the Labour Relations Act of 1995.

3.5.3.5 Phase 5: Training of assessors

Assessors involved in the selection process should be trained in fair and objective assessment techniques because assessment of competence is a sensitive and skilled task.

3.5.3.6 Phase 6: Implementation of competency approach

The competency statement is used as a foundation in the decision-making process of individuals. The competency approach is linked to the NQF and employment equity.

3.5.3.7 Phase 7: Monitoring effectiveness and adapting the process where necessary

It is important to evaluate and update the programme continually in conjunction with the company's changing needs.

3.5.4 My approach to developing a competency model

After studying the abovementioned approaches to developing a competency model, I decided to use a combination of the three approaches of Cooper (2000), Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) and Saunders (2002). Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) have the most systematic approach to developing a competency model, including specific steps to guide the researcher and in my opinion point towards using a grounded theory strategy to research design. Cooper's (2000) theory on competency models will be used in conjunction with Lucia and Lepsinger's (1999) systematic approach for an in-depth analysis of data-collection methods, whereas Saunders's (2002) approach brings the South African situation and unique elements into consideration when designing a competency model.

This research study will focus on designing a competency model by using the first phases of competency modelling on the identification and definition of competencies, and will therefore encourage further research into the assessment of the elicited competencies.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on competencies and competency modelling. Firstly, I considered the value of a competency-based approach, including the advantages and disadvantages, competency analysis and assessing for competence in the workplace. Subsequently, competencies and competences were conceptually distinguished and a definition for this particular research was determined. In this study competency is defined as knowledge, skills,

activities, capabilities, motives, traits, attitudes or behaviour, aspects of an individual's self-image or social role, as well as knowledge he uses in real-life and context-specific situations, which are observable and can be measured against set standards. Competence was defined as the skill, ability, suitability, eligibility and underlying characteristics of the individual used to undertake a job, role, function, task or duty effectively in contributing to the organisational goals in a cost-effective way. Thereafter the focus was placed on competency modelling, which included the history of competency models, definition of a competency model and explanation of the purposes and types of competency models. Thus, a competency model for this study was defined as the process of successful competency identification and written description of related competencies required for fully successful or exemplary performance in an identifiable group, such as a job category, a department or an occupation. I further considered lessons learnt from other researchers and pitfalls to avoid while developing a competency model. Then my focus turned to designing my own competency model and I considered the competency modelling approaches of Cooper, Saunders and Lucia and Lepsinger, which I decided to combine in my study. Lastly, I concluded that the aim of a competency model derived from this study is to identify and define related competencies needed for a successful security officer. The following chapter will be dedicated to my research article.

CHAPTER 4

A COMPETENCY MODEL FOR SECURITY OFFICERS:

A QUALITATIVE DESIGN

ABSTRACT

The focus of this article is to report on the findings of research aimed at designing a competency model for the selection of security officers. A qualitative study using an interpretive approach was applied in the process. Data were gathered through open-ended structured interviews with eight subject matter experts including security officers, managers and a client of a medium-sized security company. Disciplinary records were examined. A grounded-theory approach to data analysis elicited nine competencies essential to success and efficiency in a security officer role. The nine competencies elicited are general appearance, being vigilant, integrity, language proficiency, teamwork, specialist knowledge, personal motivation, following instructions and procedures and interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: competency, competence, competency modelling, qualitative research, grounded theory

Considering the crime statistics of South Africa, it is clear that crime is rife in our country. Many authors (Gilling, 1997; Minnaar, 2005; Newham, 2006; Potgieter, Ras & Neser, 2008; Schönteich & Louw, 2001; Singh, 2008) have tried to explain the reasons for the high crime indexes in South Africa, which include the weakening of the family unit, the political history of South Africa, urbanisation and the fast growing urban neighbourhood, a weak criminal justice system and the abundant availability of firearms. The private security industry has become a key performer in helping to deter and prevent crime and criminal activities (see Potgieter et al., 2008; Singh, 2008; Steenkamp & Potgieter, 2004). Even though training and education of security officers have come under scrutiny in the security industry (Pillay, 2007), there are no set criteria for selecting security officers against the backdrop of the high crime

rates and a growing private security sector. Because smaller sized companies may not have adequate resources (capital and human) to operationalise such criteria (selection standards) in their recruitment and selection practices (Singh, 2008), they run the risk of hiring criminals (Potgieter et al., 2008; Zinn, 2008).

Competencies and finding people who are competent to enhance an organisation's competitive advantage have been a subject of discussion for many years (Athey & Orth,1999; Boyatzis, 1982; Brown, 1993; Burgoyne, 1993; Carroll & McCrackin,1998; Cooper, 2000; Kurz & Bartman, 2002; Lawler, 1994; Page, Hood & Lodge, 2005; Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002; Robinson, Sparrow, Clegg & Birdi, 2007; Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory & Gowing, 2002; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999; Rowe, 1995). In 1973 McClelland wrote an article in the *American Psychologist Journal*, "Testing for Competence Rather than for Intelligence" in which he concluded that IQ and personality tests were poor predictors of competence and not related to important life outcomes (McClelland, 1973). He believed companies should recruit individuals based on competencies, rather than test scores. Interest arose in the link between people-embodied skills and individual-level competencies necessary to build the core competence of a company (Schippmann et al., 2000). The most successful changes that have occurred in organisations took place when core competencies of organisations were aligned with competencies of employees (Godbout, 2000). Godbout (2000) examines core competencies of organisations and how human resource (HR) management must be aligned to support the organisations' objectives effectively. To retain strategic competitive advantage, individual strengths, knowledge and expertise in an organisation must be used optimally to encourage the success factor and an organisation's sustainability (Godbout, 2000; Lawler, 1994; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Gaining and maintaining competitive advantage therefore constitute a compelling reason for adopting a skills- or competency-based approach.

Objective of this study

With crime prevention being a reality in South Africa and there being a lack of predetermined selection criteria in the security industry, the objective of this research was firstly to explore the attributes and characteristics of effective and ineffective security officers. In view of the significant value added to HR practices and organisational performance through competency-based selection and development approaches a competency-based approach was chosen as primary theoretical perspective guiding the research. Ultimately the objective of the study is to design a competency model for selection purposes of security officers in the safekeeping and protection of persons and property in the Thaba Tshwane area.

Potential contribution of the study

The potential contribution of this study was twofold. Firstly, this study may contribute to broadening the theoretical knowledge base of competencies required of a successful security officer. Secondly, from a methodological perspective the benefits of a tailored approach to a competency design in a medium sized security firm will be evident through the research.

Contributions relating to the practice are the following: (i) by using competency-based assessment the study provides a more reliable method of selecting appropriate candidates and excluding potentially poor performers, thus keeping "*aspiring thieves*" out of the private security arena; (ii) the study contributes in practice to a more cost-effective way of selecting security officers by using the competencies highlighted in the competency model; (iii) a more reliable and cost-effective approach to selection will potentially enhance the competitive advantage (Lawler, 1994) and sustainability (Godbout, 2000) in this firm, thus keeping them in business over the long term; (iv) this study also attempts to contribute to improving the general image of security officers and the private security industry by helping the smaller security companies to select competent security officers; (v) in initiating a competency-based approach to assessment of security officers, the security company's selection

procedures are aligned with the South African labour legislation and therefore guide the use of selection methods that are culturally fair, practical and relevant to the job (Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002).

A literature review of competencies and competency modelling follows, after which the research design and methodology are explicated. Lastly the findings of the study are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Competencies

Klemp (in Boyatzis, 1982) defines job competency as underlying characteristics of an individual, which could result in effective and/or superior performance in a job. Underlying characteristics of a person may include motives, traits, skills, aspects of an individual's self-image, social role, or even knowledge the individual uses (Boyatzis, 1982; Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999). Athey and Orth (1999, p. 216) view competency as "a set of *observable* performance dimensions, including *individual* knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as *collective* team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to *high performance*, and provide the organization with *sustainable competitive advantage"* (emphasis added). Competencies may include individual, team or organisational capabilities, which consist of knowledge or skills associated with a job, emerging knowledge or skills required for future success, intellectual or best practices of high performers, process capabilities that enhance organisational or business performance and new ways of thinking that could provide a distinctive advantage (Athey & Orth, 1999). Rodriguez et al. (2002) propagate a whole-person assessment including competencies such as interpersonal skills and teamwork, traditional knowledge, skills and abilities, because "softer skills" may be just as important for ultimate work success. Potgieter and Van der Merwe's (2002, p. 62) definition of competency is "the behaviour required by a job incumbent to perform and function with competence in a job, as well as the continuing development of behavioural repertoires required to establish and maintain competence in that job". Kurz and Bartman (2002) believe that a competency

is not the behaviour or performance itself, but the collection of capabilities, activities, processes and responses available that enables some individuals to meet work demands more effectively than others. Competencies can refer to behaviour or action or underlying abilities and characteristics or the outcome of action (Iles, 2001). Some competencies are task-oriented focusing on a job's tasks, roles and responsibilities, while other competencies are worker-oriented and focus on the underlying skills and attributes required by successful performers (Kandola & Pearn, 1992). Robinson et al. (2007) provide a broader definition of competency by including individual characteristics that differentiate superior performance from average performance or effective from ineffective performance. Koeppen, Hartig, Klieme and Leutner (2008, p. 62) define competencies as "context-specific cognitive dispositions that are acquired and needed to successfully cope with certain situations or tasks in specific domains". Competencies reveal an individual's potential to meet cognitive demands in real-life and context-specific situations (Lichtenberg et al., 2007; Koeppen et al., 2008). Competency is therefore defined in this study as knowledge, skills, activities, capabilities, motives, traits, attitudes or behaviours, aspects of an individual's self-image or social role, as well as knowledge he uses in real-life and context-specific situations, which are observable and can be measured against set standards.

Defining competence

Boyatzis (1982, p. 12) defines effective job performance as the "effective performance of a job in the attainment of specific results (i.e. outcomes) required by the job through specific actions while maintaining or being consistent with policies, procedures, and conditions of the organizational environment". Brown (1993) and Leach (2008) take the stance that qualifications are not necessarily competences, therefore an individual needs to provide evidence of competence as well as qualifications. Brown (1993) affirms this by stating management education can supply knowledge about management, but it is a challenge to supply knowledge on how to manage. A manager can know about management, but competence comes into

perspective when the manager is able to manage (the 'can do' part) (Brown, 1993). Competences, in Rowe's (1995) opinion, refer to a collection of skills that are demonstrated satisfactorily. When competence is assessed, cognisance must be taken of the fact that at the same time eligibility (does the candidate possess the right knowledge, qualifications), suitability (does the candidate have the necessary skills and is he/she physically and mentally suitable) and ability (could the candidate demonstrate the required skill to set standards in the workplace) are considered and taken into account (Rowe, 1995). Rowe (1995) explains that an individual cannot be "partially competent", he is either competent or incompetent. Kurtz and Bartman (2002) describe competence as having mastery in relation to specified goals or outcomes. Delamare le Deist and Winterton's (2005) typology of competence comprise a relationship between four dimensions, which include conceptual (cognitive, knowledge and understanding) and operational (functional, psycho-motor and applied skill) competences. The competences associated more strongly with individual effectiveness are also both conceptual (meta-competence, including learning to learn) and operational (social competence, including behaviour and attitudes). In this holistic approach to competence knowledge (as well as understanding) is captured by cognitive competence, skills are captured by functional competence and competencies (behavioural and attitudinal) are captured by social competence and meta-competence facilitates the acquisition of the other substantive competences (Delamare le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Brown (2006, p. 20) defines competence "as something an individual must demonstrate to be effective in a job, role, function, task or duty". Emphasis is placed on being competent and possessing competencies that can be demonstrated through performance, implying that an individual is not automatically competent because of prior qualifications. The general consensus is that competence is an action, an outcome, skills and ability to be demonstrated or performed and an individual is competent or incompetent, but cannot be partially competent (Brown, 1993; Brown, 2006; Gale, 2004; Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002; Rowe, 1995).

In this particular study competence is defined as the skill, ability, suitability and eligibility, underlying characteristics of the individual used to perform a

job, role, function, task or duty effectively in contributing to the organisational goals in a cost-effective way. Therefore, this study agrees with Brown (1993) and Leach (2008) that qualifications are a necessity but are not competence. An individual may have qualifications but be unable to demonstrate the learnt competence in an effective way.

Competency model

McClelland (1973, p. 1) states, "If you want to test who will be a good policeman, go find out what a policeman does. Follow him around, make a list of his activities, and sample from that list in screening applicants". McClelland thus lead the way in developing job-related competency models by determining what leads to superior performance and by identifying top performers and determining what they do (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Two important principles of McClelland's model are focusing on highly successful people without making any assumptions about their role and then paying attention to what they actually do (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Rowe, 1995).

Dubios and Rothwell (2004, p. 23) describe a competency model as a "written description of the competencies required for fully successful or exemplary performance in a job category, work team, department, division or organisation". In Teodorescu's (2006) view, competency models' results are a list of skills, knowledge, attributes and desirable behaviour believed to be a requirement for success in a specific job. Competency models are used to build training, hiring, evaluation and assessment programmes. Competency models must not only define the competencies necessary for optimal performance, they must also supply examples of the behaviour needed in the performance of a particular job (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) explain that when data are collected through focus groups, interviews and similar activities, the focus must be on real and specific behaviour that can be changed or taught through training and coaching. To optimise a competency model, it must be constructed with a specific role in mind (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). A competency model is defined in this study as successful competency identification and a written description of related

competencies required for successful or exemplary performance in an identifiable group, such as a job category, a department or an occupation.

Mansfield (1996) explains that even though using a generic competency model is less time-consuming, behaviour derived from a generic set of building blocks does not specify with whom and where the competency is demonstrated. Neither does a generic competency model distinguish between the different requirements of different jobs, which may lead to limited application for selection purposes (Mansfield, 1996). A generic competency approach also disregards technical skills and knowledge, which are crucial when matching individuals to the required job competencies (Mansfield, 1996). Delamare le Deist and Winterton (2005) examine the phenomenon that while management strategists emphasise competences that are unique and firm-specific, human resource development (HRD) literature is more concerned with developing highly transferable generic competences. Thompson et al. (in Delamare le Deist & Winterton, 2005) warn against using a generic list of competencies for managers working in a small firm, because it may undermine the very things that have led to the firm's current success. Thus, a thoroughly tailored approach (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999) was used in this study's competency modelling process, aimed at enhancing fairness and efficiency in the selection process of the security officers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

In this qualitative study an interpretive research approach was deemed appropriate to the overall descriptive and explanatory purpose of the study. Exploratory studies are crucial when researching new ground and their results could yield new insights into a topic (Babbie, 2005). Even though security and prevention of crime have been studied for some time, literature examining the competencies needed to be a competent security officer seems lacking. This study therefore explored the distinguishing skills, attributes and behaviour of a security officer by analysing subject matter experts' (SME) understanding of

efficient and inefficient security officers. Not only did this study explore the competencies needed; it also described and defined the competencies in a competency model.

Assuming an interpretive research orientation (Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Locke, 2001), this study acknowledges the need to rely on the participants' views as much as possible and still remain external and objective to the research process.

Research strategy

Congruent to an interpretive orientation, systematic-grounded theory methodology was chosen because it was best suited to achieving the stated exploratory and descriptive purposes of this research (compare Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Lempert, 2007; Locke, 2001).

Research methodology

Research context

The company the study was conducted in has been functioning in the security industry for about 20 years, even though the security guarding services have been functioning for only the past five years. It is a small to medium company, which works with an average of 40 to 80 guards at a given time, in safeguarding and protection of people and property.

Research participants

Owing to the context-specific nature of the study, purposeful sampling in this study was guided by the research question, probing the competencies of efficient versus inefficient security officers (Morse, 2007). The most efficient security officers and security officers, who would be able to give a rich and comprehensive description of the phenomenon being studied, were identified by the manager and supervisors and a list of the names was supplied to me

(McClelland, 1973; Morse, 2007). From this list, 5 security officers participated in the study. Apart from the 5 security officers I also interviewed 2 managers, as well as a client working in the security industry. The disciplinary records of the security company were furthermore scrutinised. Sampling was guided by the principle of theory building, by using SMEs (security officers, managers, client) and the disciplinary records of the security company, the different perspectives and data were collected until the same themes recurred, becoming saturated with no new themes emerging (compare Dey, 2007; Glaser, 2001; LaRossa, 2005; Morse, 2007).

Data gathering

Grounded theory usually uses the interview method for data collection (Hood, 2007). In this regard Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) recommend that data collection should begin with one-on-one interviews to elicit competencies needed to be an effective security officer.

The open-ended structured interviews with the security officers were structured with the objective to extract competencies needed to be the best security officer protecting and safeguarding people and property. Cooper (2000) warns against the challenges when interviewing, in that the interviewees may not be able to step back and critically analyse their behaviour for competencies required. To counter this problem, I used two techniques to structure the interview, namely the repertory grid technique (RGT) for the security officers and the behavioural event technique (BEI) for management and client interviews. I also analysed the disciplinary records of the company. The RGT uses the characteristic behaviours or attitudes of a specific job (Fransella, Bell & Bannister, 2004). The method entails utilising SMEs on a particular job, in this case security officers. The SME is asked to list a number of individuals who are currently working as security officers, usually eight to 12 individuals (Fransella et al., 2004). In the current study these individuals' names were written down on separate cards to represent each individual. I, as the interviewer, selected three cards randomly and asked the security officer to explain how two of the individuals are alike and

different in some way from the third (Fransella et al., 2004). A second set of three cards was drawn and the process was repeated until all possible combinations had been used and no new discriminating dimensions emerged (Fransella et al., 2004).

McClelland and his colleagues developed the BEI from the Flanagan incident method (Chell, 1998). A key difference was that the technique involved the identification of less tangible aspects of behaviour, specifically soft skills and competencies (Chell, 1998). The BEI was designed as the most flexible way to discover differences between two types of job incumbents: outstanding job incumbents and less outstanding ones, referred to as "typical" (McClelland, 1998).

The disciplinary records of the company were examined from May 2007 until July 2009. In this period of two years and two months, disciplinary action was taken against 25 employees. These were all male employees ranging from 30 to 40 years of age. Each employee had a few warnings and grievance procedures against him. Even though the final competency model should contain positive definitions of the competencies, Cooper (2000) suggests that it can be useful to investigate competencies from a negative point of view by considering employee dysfunctions. These negative behaviours or characteristics could be converted to positive traits that could be useful in compiling a competency model for selection purposes (Cooper, 2000; Saunders, 2002).

I extracted the competencies from the relevant information provided to me during the interviews (Cooper, 2000). The interviews that were conducted and the disciplinary records were integrated to form themes in the process of designing a competency model. Supporting the grounded theory approach, Stern (2007) reiterates that data collection needs to be representative and does not have to involve large amounts. Cooper (2000) also advises researchers to conduct a small number of interviews, still keeping in mind that enough data must be collected to be reliable but not to go overboard. Interviews were conducted until no new or fresh data, which would have

added to the study, were gained and thus saturation had occurred (Hood, 2007). After the client, the security officers and the managers of the firm had been interviewed and no new data or evidence had been elicited, it was evident that saturation had occurred (Hood, 2007; Shank, 2002). I still used the disciplinary procedures to substantiate the interviews and to assist with triangulation and validation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Data capturing and storage

All the interviews were audio-taped. This was done to enable me to focus on conducting the interview without dividing my attention between writing and listening to the participant (Cooper, 2000). Another reason for audio-taping the interviews were that I could refer back to the interviews with the participants and recall their feelings and language usage without consulting the participants again (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). I also transcribed the interviews myself and thus could be true to the grounded theory approach by providing thick description, describing the phenomena or occurrence "grounded" in that event (Geertz cited in Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). One of the interviews was conducted in Afrikaans. The abstracted phases or words were translated into English for accessibility to the themes. Interviews were conducted over a period from April 2009 to July 2009. Taking ethics into account, the consent forms, transcriptions and audio recording of the research study will be kept for a five-year period.

Data analysis

The data were analysed using Strauss and Corbin's (1994) systematic grounded theory approach. A set of procedures are used to develop theory, and rely on analysing data for specific types of categories in open, axial and selective coding (Creswell in Creswell & Maietta, 2002). The procedures used in systematic grounded theory are detailed by Creswell and Maietta (2002). In following this approach, the raw data obtained from the interviews and the disciplinary records were analysed manually on a thematic basis. The main objective of this research using grounded theory as strategy of inquiry was to

describe the constructs which emerged from the interviews and to classify them into categories. Below is an account of how I moved through the phases of open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

Open coding

I began with line-by-line colour-coding of the first interview (see Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Urquhart, 2007). In the same interview I linked the same words or phrases by using the same colour (a technique recommended by Boyatzis, 1982). I continued with the other interviews and colour-coded the same phrases in the same manner I had coded the first interview. I coded words or phrases that had not been used in the first interview in a different colour. The colours I used to code the different phrases and words had no significant meaning. If phrases or words did not immediately connect with other phrases and words already covered and colour-coded, I assigned another colour to the word or words (suggested by Calloway & Knapp, 1995; Goulding, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the same way the disciplinary records were analysed to test and substantiate my findings from the interviews. I started to examine the company's records for disciplinary action. At first I decided to examine a year's documents, believing that would be sufficient, but when I started to look at 2008 disciplinary action and warnings there was little information. When I returned to 2007's records on disciplinary action and warnings in the company, I found records providing adequate data to work with. My research on the disciplinary records thus covers the period from 2007 till 2009. I examined the documents relating to disciplinary action from 2007 until 2009. First, I started writing down all the offences randomly. In following the suggestions of Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Urquhart (2007) on how to analyse the data, it became evident that there were recurring disciplinary incidents involving the security officers. Once I found no evidence of new or different offences, I colour-coded the offences and identified 12 recurring ones (LaRossa, 2005; Strauss, 1987).

Axial coding

After the data had been taken apart through open coding, these were put back together in new ways by connecting categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After the colour-coding was completed I took all the coloured themes and tabulated them. At this point I need to mention that even though I analysed the data line by line, some of the sentences or phrases could not be broken down without losing their meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). I took the phrases and sentences as they were and tabulated them, but my first steps were to colour-code phrases and words, tabulate them and then analyse the raw data I was still processing. In the next step I put all the same colours together, which started to form themes, of which there were 40 at this stage of the analytical process. Then, after I had numbered the themes, I removed the colours, and went through the 40 themes to determine if any of them could be linked or combined with other themes. Some of these themes concerned management styles and procedures, not the competencies of a security officer. I combined the themes that I thought related to one another and was left with 26 themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). I was still working on the raw data (abstracts from the interviews) at this stage of the process.

Selective Coding

In this phase a core category is identified and systematically related to the other categories and it becomes the basis for the grid technique (Bester, 2007; Goulding, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Jones and Noble (2007, p. 90) believe that the Straussian concept of a core category "refers to the main theme or story line that underlies a pre-determined research topic".

 The next step in the process was to take all the words and phrases that were repeated and combine them. I used the colour-coding process again. After being left with 26 themes, I examined them again and consolidated the themes that linked with one another, leaving 13 themes that were extracted from the interviews that were conducted. My next step in the analysis of the

data was to report on what the data revealed and to interpret the data. I took the themes of the interviews and the themes of the disciplinary records and started combining and interpreting them. I combined, integrated and interpreted the data of the interviews and the disciplinary records (see Table 1 for an integration of the categories from the raw data). While I was interpreting the themes and combining the interviews with the disciplinary records, I integrated other themes that I originally thought were different ones, but that I had grouped together after closer analysis (report and sense of responsibility, as well as obeying orders, rules and regulations). Thus the nine competencies needed to be an efficient security officer working in the area of protecting and safeguarding people and property were determined (see Table 2).

Assuring quality and ethical research

From an ethical point of view, the participants were briefed (as suggested by Christians, 2000) on the subject of the research study and a consent form was completed by each participant. The consent form stated the reason for the study and emphasised freedom of participation, confidentiality and anonymity. These aspects were also confirmed with participants at the start of each interview. Hence there was no need for deception (Christians, 2000; Neuman, 2006) in this study.

Triangulation was achieved by collecting material in as many ways as possible and from different sources (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). While exploring the competencies needed for a competent security officer, open-ended structured interviews were conducted with participants representing different SME perspectives in the security industry. The differentiation was achieved by including security guards, a client and the managers of the security officers. The company's disciplinary records were analysed as a data source (even though they reflect negative characteristics or behaviours) (Cooper, 2000; Saunders, 2002). Saunders (2002) refers to these documents as performance evaluation documents.

To enhance the quality of the final study all the interviews were audio-taped, using a digital recorder, and substantiated with extensive note taking through which the researcher could increase the accuracy and completeness of documentation (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). I then transcribed the interviews and thus enhanced the extent to which I immersed myself in the data. Storing raw data (consent forms, transcriptions and audio-recordings of the study) for a five year period, furthermore adds to the ethical profile of the study.

RESULTS

After I merged the themes from the interview with the themes from the disciplinary records, I started to interpret the findings through integration with other relevant theoretical sources (Dick, 2007; Urquhart, 2007). Because the study was conducted in the security industry, I started comparing the findings with security competencies listed in the O*NET data base. I also examined the competencies for the training of security officers who were already accredited with SAQA to determine if the competencies which emerged in my study compared with any of their training competencies.

While conducting a literature search, I realised that some of competencies I had identified could be found in existing literature but under different competency labels from what I originally labelled them. In the refining phase I adapted the competency names to the existing names already found in the literature. For instance, theme 6 was first named in my research as respect for superiors and clients, but when I conducted a literature search, my behavioural definitions of this theme were the same as interpersonal relationships. Another theme, namely attitude to work, correlated with behavioural definitions of personal motivation and themes 3 and 4, which included reporting and obeying orders, correlated with following instructions and procedures. Specialist knowledge was named guarding at first, but because it sounded more like an act than a competency, qualifications and the manifestation of these qualifications that included guarding became

specialist knowledge, which is an important competency in being a security officer.

This study used a combination of approaches according to Lucia and Lepsinger (1999), Cooper (2000) and Saunders (2002) to the competency model. When combined, the competency design approaches proposed by Lucia and Lepsinger (1999), Cooper (2000) and Saunders (2002) have a similar systematic approach to data collection and analysis as Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory. In the data analysis process, systematic grounded theory was applied in categorising the raw data into themes, which relates to step 4 of Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) in developing an interim competency model that can be circulated for further adjustments. The next section contains the discussion and verification of the themes that were abstracted from the data obtained in the interviews and the disciplinary hearings.

Theme 1: General appearance

The first theme that arose from the interviews related to the general appearance of a security officer. The general appearance theme combined categories such as neatness and tidiness of the person, as suggested in the following comment: " … *looking smart and clean in his uniform; he must appear clean and he is always tidy"*. The unacceptability of being dirty and untidy was highlighted as a negative aspect of general appearance. One participant, for example, said in reference to inefficiency that the security officer doesn't wear his "*proper uniform*", and that "… *he's not that person who likes cleaning himself, he doesn't like water, water I think, is something like the enemy".* Another participant emphasised that security officers must look presentable: *"When people come here, I think they look at us and want to see something from us, but when they look [at] you and find something dirty …".* The general appearance theme is also substantiated in the disciplinary records. One disciplinary case described the counter-productiveness of "*not [being] properly dressed; improper dress attire and the dress code breached".* In examining the interviews and the disciplinary

records, it became quite clear that general appearance in this company regarding the security officers is taken very seriously and can be linked to their proficiency on the job. In section 3 of the Security Officers Act of 1987 (cited in Pillay, 2007) the training of security officers is explained. Pillay (2007) also suggests that a module that may be covered in respect of security officers themselves or the protection and safeguarding of people or property is the personal hygiene and general appearance of security officers. This concurs with the general appearance competency category, personal hygiene as a topic of concern and discussion. Johnson, Schofield and Yurchisin (2002) conclude in their study that clothing is a form of non-verbal communication and that an aspect of dress tells others something about the wearer. Bickman (1974) and Johnson, Yoo, Kim and Lennon (2008) found when security guards were dressed in uniform they could influence others' behaviour more than when they were dressed in conventional clothing. Kummen and Brown (1985) concur and identify four concepts that they investigated, namely status, deviance, smartness and tidiness of dress and formality. Because uniforms have been shown to be important, it substantiates the value of including the competency of general appearance in the competency model.

Theme 2: Being vigilant

Being vigilant was the next theme extracted from the study. The theme is firstly substantiated in view of security officers' responsibility to prevent and deter crime (Potgieter et al., 2008; Singh, 2008; Schönteich, 1999; Steenkamp & Potgieter, 2004). Being vigilant had three sub-categories, namely being inquisitive, observant and pro-active. Being inquisitive was explained by the interviewees as asking questions such as, "*why, why, why*" (e.g. why are those people just sitting in the car?) Being observant was described as important for somebody working as a security officer "*… needs to see exactly what is going on*" with "*eyes wide open to see where the danger is coming from and to do something about it".* Being proactive was suggested to involve continuous checking and patrolling, being visible and investigating if there was anything suspicious: *"… looking at gaps in the*

fences, making yourself visible…" Another respondent stated: "*… a person must be able to see a problem coming and then to take the necessary action, like phoning the supervisor, phoning the management …"* Being vigilant was also recorded by the Bureau of Labour (LBS) (2009), which stated that a security officer needs to be mentally alert and to possess razor-sharp observation skills and excellent verbal and writing abilities to document suspicious behaviour. Security officers also need to be physically fit and have quick reflexes because they may be called upon to detain individuals until law-enforcement individuals arrive (LBS, 2009). Similarly the O*NET online summary report for security officers' abilities (p. 3) includes references to vigilant behaviour:

> …the ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong; the ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions and includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events; the ability to identify or detect a known pattern (a figure, object, word or sound) that is hidden in other distracting material; the ability to detect or tell the differences between sounds that vary in pitch and loudness; the ability to see details at a distance.

Theme 3: Integrity

The theme integrity initially had two sub-categories, namely honesty and trustworthiness. Integrity in this context refers to honesty and the ability to distinguish right from wrong: *"… not covering for somebody else doing something wrong, if he sees somebody stealing and doing things that's contrary to what he knows is right he must take the necessary action …"* Integrity also relates to trustworthiness, as stated in one participant's words: "*eerstens moet hy betroubaar wees*" (he must firstly be trustworthy) and it excludes counterproductive and criminal behaviour such as stealing and lying: *"…he musn't steal or help syndicates steal in the place".* The Behavioural Competency Model of the office of human resources of Norte Dam University (2005) defines the competency of integrity as demonstrating "honest and ethical behaviour that displays a high moral standard, widely trusted,

respectful and honourable". This definition correlates with the findings of the study: honesty was an important competency of a guard and ethical behaviour was also highlighted by the participants. This included "*not covering for somebody else doing something wrong*". Trustworthiness, implying being able to trust the security officer, was also an important factor in this study.

Theme 4: Language proficiency

Language proficiency in this context includes verbal and written communication illustrated in being able to "*converse on the telephone … express himself and his thoughts properly*" in the country's most widely used official language, which is English. This theme was confirmed by O*NET online, where speaking well is highlighted as a basic skill for a security officer. The unacceptability of not being able to speak clearly was conveyed when a respondent stated, *"hy kan byvoorbeeld nie op die selfoon of met die intercom met iemand praat nie, hy kom nie oor nie"* (He is unable to express himself while speaking on a cellphone or intercom). Written communication was also substantiated by the necessity for the security officer to be able to write well and express himself when writing a report. In this regard a respondent commented, *"the 'OB' is the book that if I find something I write it down, something wrong I write it down, yes. So if I make a round I find that the window is open I try then to close that window and write it down the time and date and then I report to the office."*

Theme 5: Teamwork

Working in a team in this context is being able to work with other people harmoniously, by interacting with others and relating well to a wide variety of people. One participant said in reference to a security officer not being able to work in a team context: "*This guy is so cheeky, he disagrees with everyone, doesn't want to work with people oraait. Every time we tell him to do this, he disagree and that is not how it's supposed to be*". Another aspect that was raised that may challenge teamwork is that a security officer "*stirs amongst the people.*" In examining the disciplinary records it becomes evident that

there have been incidents where security officers working together have assaulted one another or threatened one another. Even though it is not always possible not to have conflict, another participant, referring to teamwork, said: *"This one is a positive behaviour, he work with people nicely, he doesn't fight with them*". This is substantiated by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Commonwealth competencies (2002, p. 19) guidelines for developing competency-based systems, which define teamwork as the "collaboration and cooperation of a group of employees to combine their talents to get the job done", which includes a positive attitude towards team members.

Theme 6: Specialist knowledge

Specialist knowledge starts with going through the training process stipulated by the Private Security Regulation Act 56 of 2001 (PSIRA) and receiving PSIRA accreditation. Secondly, specialist knowledge includes being able to perform guard duties. In analysing the disciplinary records it became evident that patrolling, which in this company is the method of guarding, as well as being vigilant and observant, is taken very seriously. The company gives strict instructions on when to patrol and how to patrol and this process is managed by a tracking device that the security officer carries on his person. Boyatzis (1982) refers to specialised knowledge as knowledge that must be practical, relevant and usable information on the job. This was also emphasised by a participant when referring to the qualification of a security officer: *"…be well qualified, in other words it is no use having PSIRA qualification, he must be able to prove that he can do what PSIRA requires …"* Boyatzis (1982) refers to specialised knowledge as a threshold competency and relates it to performance in the job. This study definitely showed that being qualified as a security guard is important and being able to put the qualification into practice in respect of the duties of a security officer is of the utmost importance. With this in mind a participant explained that *"A good guard must always check the time and do the patrolling at that particular time."* Another participant reiterated that "*My job is to check all the places and patrol the whole building. The meaning, I must check all, let us say we go outside, we must check all*

next to the fence, check that all the fence are oraait, let us say windows are open, we must close them …"

Theme 7: Personal motivation

Personal motivation in this study was divided into attitude to work and sense of responsibility. Attitude to work was supported by Boyatzis (1982), Rothwell and Lindholm (1999), where they refer to underlying characteristics of a person which may include motives, traits, skills, aspects of an individuals' self-image or social role, or knowledge which he uses. This was also made clear by people saying that *"whatever I do, I think I'll do with my whole heart"* and *"I like my job".* Another respondent believed that a good attitude to work is that of *"die outjie wat spons, hy's soos 'n spons hy wil, hy vra vrae… die outjie wat wil leer, wat wil ontwikkel"* (A person who is like a sponge, he asks questions and wants to learn, who wants to develop). A sense of responsibility relates to Spencer and Spencer's (cited in Godbout, 2000) commitment to results where *"some of the guards are walking the extra mile".* Monk (2001) also refers to the competency "personal motivation" in her study; it includes drive and substantiates a sense of responsibility in getting to work and being punctual or arriving early on duty. Taking the disciplinary records into consideration in this particular company included being absent without leave, reporting late for duty, leaving the allocated site without informing the supervisor or management and sleeping on duty, being under the influence of liquor while on duty, not patrolling as was instructed or failing to patrol, arriving at work late or not contacting the office when absent. Responses from the respondents, which could manifest in a negative sense of responsibility, included security officers *"not worrying about whoever is going to take over from them to protect the property which can have millions of rands worth of equipment, they just ignore that and stay away"* and *"there's a sense they can stay away for 10 days and then they expect to come back and to be re-employed and to carry on with their normal things."*

Theme 8: Following instructions and procedures

In the company rules and regulations are communicated through instructions placed in the guard room, through delegations of duty and verbal instructions. This was confirmed by a respondent: "…*must be obedient to the rules that we give him to do …"* Hattingh (2006) cites the UCF20 competency name and definitions, which includes the competency: following instructions and procedures. Following instructions and procedures is defined as "following instructions and procedures, adhering to schedules and ideas and demonstrating commitment to the organisation" (p. 165). This is substantiated by another interviewee: "… *the 'OB' is the book that if I find something I write it down, something wrong I write it down, yes. So if I make a round I find that the window is open I try then to close that window and write it down the time and date and then I report to the office." "… If I see there is a hole to the fence I [am] supposed to phone to the supervisor or to the office, yes to tell them 'hey' I patrolled and I found that [in] the fence is a hole."* Another respondent explained the negative consequence of disobeying rules and regulations: "… *the relieving guard hasn't pitched up yet, there is two ways of doing it he can just sit and protect the other person not doing anything about it, although there are instructions that tell them exactly what to do they ignore that because they want to cover up"* and *"… to come to work if they know they are not going to be there to do something about it, they just basically stay away …"* The O*NET online summary report for security officers refers to knowledge pertaining to public safety and security, which includes knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures and strategies to promote effective security operations. Knowledge pertaining to safety and security issues substantiates why the competency of following instructions and procedures is important. In this company creativity is not encouraged but adhering to the company rules and regulations is. In the themes extracted from the disciplinary records it became evident that when rules and regulations are not adhered to, the security of the clients' premises is placed at risk.

Theme 9: Interpersonal relationships

In this study interpersonal relationships were divided into management relationships and client relationships. Management relationships were explained as having respect for superiors, which is demonstrated in the way the security officer addresses his superiors by conversing in "*a proper tone and not being rude".* The importance of management relationships between employees and the employer was substantiated by the disciplinary records, reflecting that security officers had been guilty of intimidation, impudence, insolence and gross insubordination towards superiors. Client relationships in relation to this study concerned how the security officer approaches the client, the way in which he speaks and the way he addresses clients. O*NET confirms this theme as important to a security officer, and refers to it as a social skill which includes "active[ly] looking for ways to help people". The respondents suggested that the security officer should *"respect the client"* by handling *"the people the way that the other person can feel good, he's accepted by this guard".* Another comment made by a respondent was that a security officer may never become too friendly: "*maar hierdie ou gesels nou weer te veel"* (this person is talking too much - overfriendly). I named this competency interpersonal relationships, since the security officer (even though he must be friendly to clients and is delivering a service) may never become "friends" with the clientele. A security guard's aim is to protect and it may become a security risk if the security officer becomes too friendly with the client. The client and manager relationship must always remain on a professional level.

A summary of the 9 themes and the related behavioural descriptions of each are depicted in table 1 below:

Table 1: Grouping of categories into nine core themes

Competency	Behavioural indicators	Behavioural statements including negative behaviour
General Appearance		• Neat – in appearance • Looks smart and clean in his uniform • Able to dress properly • Looks presentable **Negative behaviour** • Improper dress attire (pants look if they were slept in, no shirt or tie, wrong shoes etc) • Untidy
Vigilance	**Observation/ Observant**	• To be wide awake/ Notices things happening • Eyes open • Notices things out of the ordinary • Open to attack (through fences, people just sitting in their vehicles, anybody cutting the electric fence) • Check and see if there is anything suspicious • Observation
	Inquisitive	• Take necessary action to raise alarm in office and other guards • Asks questions- "why, why, why" • Being vigilant, looking at gaps in the fences, making being visible
	Pro-active	**Negative behaviour** • Slouching around because you must walk every half an hour" • "Looking at the trees and the birds and you [are]not *looking*" (researchers emphasis, got from the taped interview) • …"he's not just walking around to fulfil four minutes of walking"…
Following Instructions and Procedures	**Reporting**	• Report other security officers not performing their security duties • Report other security officers failure to report for duty , on time • Reporting inconsistencies while on duty • Guard room • Delegations of duty • Set of instructions
	Obeying orders	**Negative behaviour** • Under the influence of liquor while on duty • Disobeying lawful command: refusing to implement timesheets/schedule as prescribed by head office; not contacting the office about not reporting for duty; not following grievance procedure; not patrolling as instructed; failure to patrol with tracker)
Integrity	**Honesty**	• Reporting other fellow security officers' misconduct • Know what is right and wrong, • He must not steal or help syndicates steal in the place • He must firstly be trustworthy **Negative behaviour** • Lying, dishonesty, telling the supervisor that the site is covered, but when the supervisor goes to check, it is not appropriately covered. • Devious and dishonest - says site is covered, but it is not
	Trustworthiness	

Competency	Behavioural indicators	Behavioural statements including negative behaviour
Interpersonal Relationships	**Management relationship** **Client relationship**	• Respectful • Way he addresses me • Speaks in a proper tone of voice • Speaking rudely • Respect and courteous to client and management **Negative** • Overfriendly • Insolence towards senior management • Insubordination • Intimidating supervisors
Language Proficiency	**Written communication** **Verbal Communication**	• Speak properly • Converse on the telephone • Answer a telephone properly (e.g express himself properly) • Express his thoughts • Bilingual • Speaks very well, • He writes very well **Negative** • He cannot get his message across
Teamwork		• Working in a team/ Team player **Negative aspects** • Always disagreeable • Short-tempered • Stir amongst the people
Specialist Knowledge	**Qualification**	• Looking after buildings • Letting people come in through gates (*Manning gates)* • Patrol the site/buildings • PSIRA qualification (be able to prove that he can do what PSIRA requires from a grade A,B,C,D,E) **Negative behaviour/attitude** • Needing to be instructed or reminded to patrol
Personal motivation	**Attitude towards work** **Sense of responsibility**	• Personal interest in his work. • Positive attitude • Enjoy work as a security officer • Going the extra mile • Inquisitive, he wants to learn more • Sense of responsibility **Negative behaviour** • Arriving late for duty/work. • Do not come to work • Leaves site before completion of duty. • Leaves post without permission. • Sleeps on duty.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to construct a competency model for security officers for selection purposes for the safekeeping and protection of persons and property in the Thaba Tshwane area. From the study it became clear that in order to enhance a small to medium company's competitive advantage and survival, a tailored approach to competencies and thus a competency model has to be used. Thus in relation to this study, generic competencies for selection purposes are not propagated. The final competency model for security officers working in the safekeeping and protection of persons and property in the Thaba Tshwane area are depicted in table 2 below:

Table 2: Final competency model for security officers working to safeguard and protect people and property

COMPETENCY	COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS
General Appearance	Be presentable by always looking neat and clean and wearing the correct uniform.
Being Vigilant	**Inquisitive** means continually to ask why, why? (e.g., why are those people just sitting in the car?) **Observation** means to be aware of the surroundings, particularly anything out of the ordinary (e.g. a broken fence) **Pro-active** means continually checking and patrolling, to be visible
Following Instructions and Procedures	**Report** anything out of the ordinary to the supervisor **Obey** rules and regulations set out in delegations of duty, verbal instructions and company policies
Integrity	**Honesty is illustrated in** knowing what is right and wrong; this includes not stealing or cheating **Trustworthiness** includes being able to rely on the security officer to report for duty, letting the office know of any occurrences on the site
Interpersonal Relationships	**Management relationships** include being respectful in addressing supervisors, not intimidating or threatening supervisors **Client relationships** include being helpful and respectful without becoming overfriendly with the client
Language Proficiency	**Verbal communication** includes being able to communicate clearly and concisely in English, telephonically or conversing with the client and employer **Written communication** includes being able to write reports in a clear and concise way in English
Teamwork	Must be able to work with others harmoniously
Specialist Knowledge	**Qualifications** include the necessary accreditation awarded by PSIRA, and knowing what the duties of a security officer entail
Personal Motivation	**Attitude towards work** includes enjoying working as a security officer, having a positive attitude and having a personal interest in the work of a security officer. **Sense of responsibility** includes taking responsibility by not being absent without informing the supervisor, not leaving the premises without permission, not being under the influence of alcohol while on duty

Limitations

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) and Locke (2001), a qualitative grounded theory study is context-specific, and thus has limited generalisability of the findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). Criticism against the credibility of qualitative research findings has also been raised. The credibility of this study was addressed through triangulation, by using security officers, managers, a client and the disciplinary records of the security company involved in this research (Dey, 2007; Glaser, 2001; LaRossa, 2005; Morse, 2007). The competency model is based on competencies that have been identified in a single study at a particular point in time. The competency model should be reviewed periodically in order to remain relevant and focus on the competitive advantage it may give the company. Owing to the different applications (performance appraisal, recruitment, selection) of a competency-based approach and ultimately a competency model, it therefore becomes difficult to compare the results from one study to the next.

Recommendations

The validation of the model was outside the scope of this research. An opportunity therefore exists to test the validity of the competencies for selection purposes. In order to identify those individuals likely to succeed in the profession, it is recommended that the competency model be used in conjunction with traditional predictors of success. Thereafter a competency model as a set criteria for an assessment centre could be compiled for selection purposes of security officers. Assessment exercises (Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002) and interview questions can be developed to assess the fit between the candidate and the core competencies required for the specific job (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Grigoryev, 2006). Furthermore, it is recommended that the competencies identified as being critical for selection purposes be translated into a performance management system. In so doing, a set standard can be maintained after the selection process has been completed (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Montier, Alai & Kramer, 2006). Another recommendation is that verification studies on the differences of

small to medium security companies concerning competencies and competency models should be researched.

Conclusion

The nine competencies elicited from this study contributed to the building blocks of literature in relation to a competency model for security officers working in the private security industry.

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CHAPTER 5

PRÉCIS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Courage is being scared to death- and saddling up anyway
(John Wayne in Covey & Hatch, 2006, p. 83)

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This is the concluding chapter of my research project. I started my research journey with a quote from Abraham Lincoln which stated, if you apply your mind to anything and make a plan, it will be successful. Looking back I concur with John Wayne that I was scared to death about embarking on this project, but it had to be done to attain my degree. Combining these two quotes and realizing that I made a decision that I can and must accomplish this part of my student journey, I found the courage and completed this research study. I learnt to trust myself and the process of growing and continuously learning.

 I conclude this study by firstly providing a summary of the study. Secondly, I briefly glance at the discoveries I made and their implications. Thirdly, I focus on the shortcomings of my study and lastly I make some recommendations, which include suggestions for future research.

5.2   SUMMARY

The objective of my research project was to design a competency model for security officers for selection purposes working to protect and safeguard persons and property in the Thaba Tshwane area. The type of study was qualitative in nature, using an interpretive stance. I followed the Straussian and Corbin's grounded theory approach for my strategy of inquiry.

In **chapter 1** I contextualized the study by firstly referring to crime in South Africa and the private security industry. I identified possible reasons for crime, looked at crime statistics and considered the possibilities of crime prevention. Thereafter the focus was directed at the private security industry. The private security industry's growth, nature of the work, education and training and lastly employment in the private security industry were examined. Although the literature provided evidence that quality assurance was in the process of being established through outcomes-based training aligned with NQF unit standards and qualifications (Pillay, 2007), no set criteria for selecting security officers against the backdrop of the high crime rates and a growing private security sector are available. In examining the literature, I found only generic competencies for security officers. Thus, my evolving interest in the study topic, the choices I had to make and the reason for my decision to design a competency model for selection purposes of security officers were explicated. Therefore, I felt that I would be able to make a modest contribution to the field of industrial and organisational psychology.

The focus of the first chapter then turned to the research methodology applied in this research**.** I presented the research methodology in a manner that would reflect a natural and chronological account of the research process. Thus, I started my qualitative journey by demarcating the research context, gaining access to the field, identifying research participants (purposeful sampling), making contact with the participants and discussing ethical considerations with them. Even though I explained in detail what the research was about and all the ethical requirements for research, including anonymity and confidentiality and the right to voluntary participation, three security officers were unwilling to participate in the research project. Although disappointed, I accepted that some did not want to participate in the research and interviewed the remaining five security officers.

I discussed how I started with the data collection process by using the RGT because it could be viewed as a form of structured interview designed to make those constructs with which individuals organise their world more visible. The BEI was used as a tool during interviews with the managers to

elicit evidence of less tangible aspects of behaviour, specifically soft skills and competencies of behavioural characteristics. Critical incidents were taken from the disciplinary records of the company. I explained how I collected and managed the data and how I decided to terminate data collection by following Dey (2007) and Morse's (2007) suggestion that saturation occurs when adding to the data makes no difference. The last point that was discussed under data collection was the recording and storing of data; the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed for data analysis.

The next section in my research journey was the data analysis process. The process of open coding, axial coding and selective coding, which Strauss and Corbin see as writing the emerging theory, was examined and explained. The article (chapter 4) explains the practical process which was followed and the emerging competency model in detail.

Chapter 2, the second chapter of my dissertation was dedicated to my research design. I dedicated a whole chapter to exploring the different philosophies of science. Johnson and Duberley (2000), together with Hatch and Yanow (2008), reiterate the importance of stating the epistemological and ontological stance of a study. I examined the ontological assumptions of the positivist, constructionist and interpretivist paradigms. Thereafter I examined the epistemological assumptions of positivism, critical theory and interpretivism. The aim of this study is to determine what competencies an efficient security officer possesses. In doing this I align myself with an interpretive ontology, believing I need to access participants' perspectives and experiences of efficient and inefficient security officers. I also aligned myself with an interpretive epistemology whereby I believe I can remain objective yet still elicit the subjective meanings grounded in the participants' experiences.

Thereafter the focus shifted to the type of research I would be conducting. The differences between a qualitative and a quantitative approach were highlighted. I concur with Becker (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) that both styles emphasise doing the same thing differently. Because my study focused on exploring the competencies needed for a security officer, and in congruence

with my underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions, a qualitative approach was best suited to contributing and enhancing the design of a competency model in this study's context. By adopting a qualitative research approach I could scientifically interpret and transform the research participants' interpretation of reality in order to offer a theoretical representation of these competencies to an audience. I decided to use grounded theory as a strategy of inquiry to assist in the exploration, discovery, analysis and interpretation of patterns obtained from the participants' realities.

I elaborated on the three dominant designs in grounded theory, namely systematic design, emerging design and constructivist design. The decision was made to follow a Straussian approach and I relied on Strauss and Corbin's systematic approach to grounded theory. Systematic design uses set procedures to develop theory, and relies on analysing data for specific types of categories in axial coding.

Chapter 3. Even though many authors warn against a literature review at the beginning of a qualitative study, Strauss, (1987) believes that no theory is made from scratch. Dick (2007) reiterates that to start a research project without doing any literature review can make it difficult to determine what is of importance in the study. Thus, it would have been impossible to determine what competencies were important for security officers if I didn't have an idea of the definition of a competency. Firstly, I considered the evolution from a job-based approach to a competency-based approach to selection. The advantages and disadvantages of a competency-based approach were examined. Thereafter, competencies were examined and a definition of a competency was defined for this particular study. I took the stance that competencies and competence are not the same, but competencies are the building blocks for competence. Thereafter competency models were examined, considering the history, the definition, the purpose, different types and lessons learnt. Three approaches were examined in relation to developing a competency model and an approach to developing a competency model for this study was determined.

Chapter 4 is my article, titled 'A competency model for security officers: a qualitative design.' The focus of this article was to report on the findings of research aimed at designing a competency model for the selection of security officers.

The next section will focus on the summary of the results, where nine themes were extracted for the competency model of security officers protecting and safeguarding people and property in the Thaba Tswane area.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Nine categories emerged from the data that were grouped together to form the competencies of a security officer. These categories reflect behaviours that may be regarded as competencies manifested by an efficient security officer. They are summarized in Table 5.1 and briefly discussed as they are grounded in the data below.

Theme 1: General appearance

The first theme that arose from the interviews related to the general appearance of a security officer and combined categories such as neatness and tidiness of the person. The unacceptability of being dirty and untidy was highlighted as a negative aspect of general appearance. In examining the interviews and the disciplinary records, it became quite clear that in this company general appearance regarding the security officers is taken very seriously and can be linked to their proficiency on the job.

Theme 2: Being vigilant

Being vigilant was the next theme extracted from the data. The theme is firstly substantiated in view of security officers' responsibility to prevent and deter crime. Being vigilant had three subheadings, namely being inquisitive, observant and pro-active. Being inquisitive was explained by the interviewees

as asking questions such as, "*why, why, why*". Being observant was described as important for somebody working as a security officer. Being proactive was suggested to involve continuous checking and patrolling, being visible and investigating if there was anything suspicious.

Theme 3: Integrity

The theme of integrity initially had two subheadings, namely honesty and trustworthiness. Integrity in this context refers to honesty and the ability to distinguish right from wrong. Integrity also relates to trustworthiness, and it excludes counterproductive and criminal behaviour such as stealing and lying.

Theme 4: Language proficiency

Language proficiency in this context includes verbal and written communication illustrated in being able to converse on the telephone in the country's most widely used official language, which is English. This theme was confirmed by O*NET online, where speaking well is highlighted as a basic skill for a security officer.

Theme 5: Teamwork

Working in a team in this context is being able to work with other people harmoniously, by interacting with others and relating well to a wide variety of people. In examining the disciplinary records, it becomes evident that there have been incidents where security officers working together have assaulted one another or threatened one another.

Theme 6: Specialist knowledge

Specialist knowledge starts with going through the training process stipulated by PSIRA and receiving PSIRA accreditation. Secondly, specialist knowledge includes being able to perform guard duties. In analysing the disciplinary records it became evident that patrolling, which in this company is the method of guarding, as well as being vigilant and observant, is taken very seriously.

This study definitely showed that being qualified as a security officer is important and being able to put the qualification into practice in respect of the duties of a security officer is of the utmost importance.

Theme 7: Personal motivation

Personal motivation in this study was divided into attitude to work and sense of responsibility. Taking the disciplinary records into consideration in this particular company included being absent without leave, reporting late for duty, leaving the allocated site without informing the supervisor or management and sleeping on duty, being under the influence of liquor while on duty, not patrolling as was instructed or failing to patrol, arriving at work late or not contacting the office when absent.

Theme 8: Following instructions and procedures

In the company, rules and regulations are communicated through instructions placed in the guard room, through delegations of duty and verbal instructions. In this company creativity is not encouraged but adhering to the company rules and regulations is. In the themes extracted from the disciplinary records it became evident that when rules and regulations are not adhered to, the security of the clients' premises is placed at risk.

Theme 9: Interpersonal relationships

In this study interpersonal relationships were divided into management relationships and client relationships. Management relationships were explained as having respect for superiors, which is demonstrated in the way the security officer addresses his superiors. The importance of management relationships between employees and the employer was substantiated by the disciplinary records, reflecting that security officers had been guilty of intimidation, impudence, insolence and gross insubordination towards superiors. Client relationships in relation to this study concerned how the

security officer approaches the client, the way in which he speaks and the way he addresses clients**.**

Table 5.1: Final competency model for security officers working to safeguard and protect people and property

COMPETENCY	COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS
General Appearance	Be presentable by always looking neat and clean and wearing the correct uniform.
Being Vigilant	**Inquisitive** means continually to ask why, why? (e.g., why are those people just sitting in the car?) **Observation** means to be aware of the surroundings, particularly anything out of the ordinary (e.g. a broken fence) **Pro-active** means continually checking and patrolling, to be visible
Following Instructions and Procedures	**Report** anything out of the ordinary to the supervisor **Obey** rules and regulations set out in delegations of duty, verbal instructions and company policies
Integrity	**Honesty is illustrated in** knowing what is right and wrong; this includes not stealing or cheating **Trustworthiness** includes being able to rely on the security officer to report for duty, letting the office know of any occurrences on the site
Interpersonal Relationships	**Management relationships** include being respectful in addressing supervisors, not intimidating or threatening supervisors **Client relationships** include being helpful and respectful without becoming overfriendly with the client
Language Proficiency	**Verbal communication** includes being able to communicate clearly and concisely in English, telephonically or conversing with the client and employer **Written communication** includes being able to write reports in a clear and concise way in English
Teamwork	Must be able to work with others harmoniously
Specialist Knowledge	**Qualifications** include the necessary accreditation awarded by PSIRA, and knowing what the duties of a security officer entail
Personal Motivation	**Attitude towards work** includes enjoying working as a security officer, having a positive attitude and having a personal interest in the work of a security officer. **Sense of responsibility** includes taking responsibility by not being absent without informing the supervisor, not leaving the premises without permission, not being under the influence of alcohol while on duty

5.4 DISCOVERIES MADE IN THE STUDY

In view of the lack of literature concerning the selection criteria of competent security officers in South Africa I am convinced that the competency model for security officers working to safeguard and protect people and property has contributed to building theoretical knowledge. By identifying themes, a conceptual framework was formalised and I gained insight into the competencies needed to be an efficient security officer. Discoveries made this research exciting and it also satisfied the aim of the study, which was to explore and describe and ultimately to interpret the raw data to produce a competency model for security officers working to safeguard and protect people and property in the Thaba Tswane area. I made the following discoveries during my research study:

- Competencies are the building blocks for competence. Competencies are thus the underlying attributes while competence is the product of these underlying attributes.

- Being qualified is helpful but does not ensure efficiency and thus an individual needs to provide evidence of competence as well as qualifications. Emphasis is placed on being competent and possessing competencies that can be demonstrated through performance, implying that an individual is not automatically competent because of prior qualifications.

- It is advised that a set of competencies should number between eight and 12, because the recollection of these competencies is difficult without referring to substantiating documents.

- Competencies must be well defined and written in a language that everyone will be able to understand.

- It is not advisable to use a generic competency model for small to medium companies, because a generic competency model may hinder the companies' competitive advantage.

5.5 NOTICEABLE SHORTCOMINGS

Like any other study, this study has noticeable shortcomings that need to be considered when evaluating its results. In general the qualitative nature of the study and the fact that the study was only conducted in one particular company, can be seen as a limitation in the traditional positivistic view of research. The study findings may therefore not be generalisable, but I believe it may be transferred to similar contexts. In further reflecting on the shortcomings, I elaborate on shortcomings in the literature and in the empirical parts of the study.

5.5.1 Noticeable shortcomings pertaining to the literature study

With regard to the literature review, the following shortcomings were encountered in the literature:

- Shortcomings in the literature review relate largely to the absence of published journal articles dealing specifically with criteria for competencies needed for the selection of security officers. A possible explanation could be that the criteria for selecting security officers have been developed as an organisational tool and typically these users do not publish their findings.
- There is no generally accepted definition of competencies and what competence constitutes, and thus there appears to be an ongoing debate on firstly what the concept means, secondly how it should be observed and thirdly how it can be measured.
- Owing to the different applications (performance appraisal, recruitment, selection) of a competency-based approach and ultimately a competency model, it becomes difficult to compare the results from one study to the next.

5.5.2 Noticeable shortcomings pertaining to the empirical study

With regard to the empirical study, the following shortcomings are highlighted

- This research was conducted primarily for academic purposes, with the scope being limited to the development of a competency model. The purpose of this study was to be an exploratory theory-building study. The competencies identified have therefore not been validated, thus the model must be used with caution. Even though the results of this study has not yet been piloted, validation of the competency model was pursued through triangulation (using security officers, managers, a client and disciplinary records; substantiating findings with literature).

- Interviews were conducted in English and Afrikaans. Interviewing the security officers in a second or maybe their third language was a hindrance, I had to probe and felt that they did not have the freedom of speech which they would have had in their home language.

- While using the RGT in the interviews with the security officers, I only used the RGT as a mechanism to elicit the competencies of a security officer. Thus, I did not use the RGT in totality in accordance with Fransella et al. (2004) by formulating and examining the grids. My decision to use the RGT was designed to aid the participants in making the participants' task easier while trying to elicit the competencies and behaviours of security officers (refer to Cooper, 2000).

- The competency model has been based on competencies that have been identified in a single study at a particular point in time. The competency model should be reviewed from time to time in order to remain relevant and focus on the competitive advantage it may give the company (refer to chapter 3).

- The experience of the researcher could be seen as a shortcoming. Working with grounded theory as a novice researcher had its challenges. Firstly, since the researcher had training in quantitative research rather than qualitative research, grounded theory was a whole new field to be studied, understood and applied. In this regard the literature on grounded

theory methodology and the processes to follow was not very user-friendly.

- All the methods used in this study to gather information (RGT, BEI) are worker-oriented in approach, and the research is therefore subject to human error and subjectivity.

Even though these shortcomings have to be kept in mind, I feel confident that this study has made a modest contribution to the field of industrial and organisational psychology and the private security industry.

5.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

Against the background of the aforementioned discoveries and shortcomings, recommendations for industrial and organisational psychology and further research in the field are outlined below.

The validation of the model was outside the scope of this research. An opportunity therefore exists to test the validity of the competencies for selection purposes.

In order to identify those individuals likely to succeed in the profession, it is recommended that the competency model be used in conjunction with traditional predictors of success. Grigoryev (2006) elaborates on the effectiveness of the hiring process when a well-developed competency model is used and a combination of technical/professional skills and soft skills are aligned with organisational goals.

After validating the study, it is recommended that this competency model be used and a set criteria be determined. In this manner an assessment centre could be established for the selection of security officers. Assessment exercises (Potgieter & Van der Merwe, 2002) and interview questions can be

developed to assess the fit between the candidate and the core competencies required for the specific job (Carroll & McCrackin, 1998; Grigoryev, 2006).

Because competencies are described in terms of behaviours and are thus measurable, it is recommended that the competencies identified as being critical for selection purposes be translated into an interview questionnaire and also into a performance management system. A set standard can thus be maintained after the selection process has been completed.

This research was done on a small to medium security company. It is recommended that the same methodology be used to verify the discoveries made in this particular research in other companies. What I would like to recommend are verification studies on the differences between small to medium security companies concerning competencies and competency models.

Using a competency model holds many benefits for selection purposes. A competency model used for selection purposes can also aid in the candidate's assessment of his/her own readiness and can help the candidate focus on training and developmental plans to address missing competencies (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Spicer, 2009).

5.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter is the concluding chapter of this study. Firstly, a summary of the chapters were provided. Subsequently, the results of the study accumulated into the final competency model consisting of nine themes for the security officers. Then the focus turned to discoveries and implications whereafter noticeable shortcomings pertaining to the literature and empirical study were addressed. Lastly, I concluded with recommendations.

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