

**YOUNG AFRICAN WOMEN AND THE
UMHLANGA CEREMONY: A CASE
STUDY IN HISTORICAL
CONSCIOUSNESS**

by

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Master of Education**

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SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

“As the candidate’s supervisor, I agree to the submission of this dissertation.”

Prof Johan Wassermann

PERSONAL DECLARATION

I, Gilbert Nxumalo (212560313) declare that:

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Gilbert Nxumalo

Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Masters in History Education dissertation to my late father, Njani Nxumalo (1920- 1992), and my mother Piya Nxumalo. They were inspirational in my studies, even though both did not go to school and could not read and write. Their tireless pushing has brought me this far. In times of financial difficulties they sold their cows in order for me to obtain the money so as to advance my studies. To me they both left a remarkable imprint on my consciousness of how parents should behave towards their children.

ABSTRACT

Keywords: *Umhlanga* ceremony; historical consciousness; unofficial history; virginity testing; young African women

In this study the historical consciousness of young African women as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony was researched. As theorisation for historical consciousness the positioning of Angvik (1997), that it is the connection of interpretations of the past, perceptions of the present and expectations of the future were adopted. This study was motivated by the tension that was observed between the learning of official history as taught in school and unofficial history as related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Hence the following research questions were posed: What is the historical consciousness of young African women regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony and why do young African women have the historical consciousness they have regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony? This study was qualitative in nature and rooted in the interpretivist paradigm. I employed semi-structured focus group interviews and émigré perspectives to understand the historical consciousness of young African women as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. It was found that the young African women did not have a collective historical consciousness related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. It was rather a double consciousness that was ambiguous in nature about the future of the *Umhlanga* ceremony based on their present experiences. These experiences were influenced by, amongst others, tensions between traditional African ideas and Westernization; traditional customs and human rights as enshrined in the constitution and traditional rituals and commercialisation. Much of this could be attributed to the very limited sense of the past as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony which resulted in a historical consciousness which was not a neat agreed-upon master narrative.

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CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the study itself. The topic of my study is: Young African women and the *Umhlanga* ceremony: A case study in historical consciousness. Young African women in this study refer to young African women who are 16 to 19 years of age who partook in the *Umhlanga* ceremony. This study was undertaken in the Ixopo district of KwaZulu-Natal on young African women to understand their historical consciousness as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony and more specifically their sense on how the past, present and future are related and intertwined and exercise influence on each other - in other words their historical consciousness of the event and how this is acquired as a form of unofficial history education. Finally, this chapter provides a “route map” of what my study is all about. It presents the background to the research problem and sets the tone of the research under the following sub-headings: Introduction; Background and Context; Rationale and Motivation; Purpose and Focus of the study; Research Methodology; Research Questions; Theoretical Framework; Route map of the study as well as the Conclusion to the study. In a nutshell, in Chapter I explained the research problem and how it was addressed in this study.

It is, however, also necessary at the outset to clarify the phenomenon under study and the key concepts to be used in this study. The phenomenon under study in this dissertation is historical consciousness (the relationship between the past, present and the future) and how it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Although virginity testing is a precursor to the *Umhlanga* ceremony it will not be foregrounded since the focus is on the latter. I do, however, admit that virginity testing is an important part of the process but in this study I separated the *Umhlanga* ceremony from virginity testing. Furthermore, although the terms African and women featured in the topic the focus of the study is not

on gender or race but on historical consciousness. Lastly, although the participants in this study were mostly Zulu I have opted to use the term African since young Zulu and young Swazi women are being joined by young Xhosa women in the *Umhlanga* ceremony's celebration at *Enyokeni* (Nxumalo et al., 2003).

1.2 Background, context and overview

Nxumalo et al., (2003) state that before the reign of the first Zulu king, Shaka, the *Umhlanga* ceremony was practised as it was part of the tradition of the Zulu people. Shaka, however, stopped the practice ostensibly because he did not want his people to be infiltrated by the enemies of the Zulu people during mass gatherings. Harrison, Xaba, Kunene and Ntuli (2001) also agree that the *Umhlanga* ceremony has been a tradition of the Zulu people in the past. The ceremony, however, continued to be practiced by the neighbouring Swazi people without interruption. According to Nxumalo et al., (2003) the revival of *Umhlanga* ceremony could be traced back to 1984 when the current Zulu king, Zwelithini, reinstated it. In the process he reinvented a long-dormant Zulu ritual in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal.

However, before the young African women can partake in the *Umhlanga* ceremony they first have to undergo virginity testing. In fact the *Umhlanga* cannot be held without a virginity test having taken place first. Therefore, a virginity test is the epistemological aspect of the *Umhlanga* ceremony. However, as previously mentioned, virginity testing is not the focus of this study but the ceremony itself is. Nevertheless it is necessary to briefly explain, in the context of this study, the virginity testing procedure.

According to the literature virginity testing served multiple purposes. It is argued that it serves as a rite of passage for young African women in providing a clear and guided means for transition from one life stage and sphere of responsibility to another (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001) which is maturing from being a child into adulthood. Historically, in addition to the recurrent daily and seasonal patterns of African life emphasis is placed on the non-recurring moments of a person such as the first menstruation. Hence young

African women's ceremonies general used to coincide with their first menstruation which was a visible sign of physical maturity ((Nxumalo, Msimang, & Cooke, 2003); Harrison, Xaba, Kunene & Ntuli 2001). The virginity testing thus marked a new beginning and a transition from one life stage to another. It is also claimed that virginity testing serves the community as a symbol of collective morality. Virginity testing it is maintained is also an African ritual that links the individual to the community and the community to the spirit world (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). The aim of conducting virginity testing is also to ensure that the father, as the head of the family, would be paid the correct number of cattle as part of the *lobola* process if his daughter is still a virgin. Other more contemporary reasons advanced for virginity testing related to unwanted pregnancies and the avoidance of sexually transmitted diseases.

In the view of LeClerc-Madlala (2001) the *Umhlanga* ceremony is an event of great dignity and pride for the young women involved in the event and also for their families and communities.

The act of testing is performed by the *oNomezho*. They are married women with children and are roughly 45 years old or older. They should also be experienced and respected women in the community (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). According to Leclerc Madlala, (2001) the process of virginity testing can empower these older women. They are called *oNomezho* since they inspect the hymen in the young African woman's vagina. In some communities virginity testing was performed at home and not at the home of the *oNomezho* with the young women being inspected in the presence of her mother. The mother was then educated and equipped with virginity testing skills where the inspection was started before puberty (*ukuthomba*). This process of virginity testing, it is argued, prepared both the mother and the child for communication during puberty and also aligned them towards the *Umhlanga* ceremony (Nxumalo, et al., 2003). According to Vincent (2006) those who participate in the *Umhlanga* ceremony must be 'certified' virgins and this process of certification has come under the spotlight in post-apartheid South African laws.

Young African women who have been tested and certified as virgins may partake in the *Umhlanga* ceremony. This ceremony is held during spring time, in the month of September and is a symbol of the fact that young African women themselves are at the threshold of giving birth to new life as they are in the springtime of their adult life ((Nxumalo, et al., 2003).

Nxumalo et al., (2003) propose that the *Umhlanga* ceremony takes its name from the reeds which grow along riverbeds. Young African women carry these reeds at the *Umhlanga* ceremony since they symbolize their fragility for the *Umhlanga* is itself fragile. They need to be carried with special care for they break easily if carried haphazardly. Young African women are generally, metaphorically speaking, regarded as similar to the reed, because they lose their virginity easily if they are brought up negligently. According to LeClerc Madlala, (2001) there is a belief that if a young African woman who is not a virgin takes part in the *Umhlanga* ceremony her reed will break and embarrass her in public view. The elders would know of her status as not being a virgin and thereafter they would take the necessary steps to make the responsible man pay a penalty (Nxumalo et al, 2003). In the light of the above it is argued that the *Umhlanga* ceremony has profound meaning to the Zulu people.

The Zulu king always invites young African women who have been tested and found to still be virgins to take part in the *Umhlanga* ceremony at his royal homestead at *Enyokeni*. Young African women then go to the riverside where the *Umhlanga* grows abundantly. Historically, they would cut the *Umhlanga* themselves. A traditional cloth, almost the size of an adult's hand covers the body just below the stomach. They also wear beaded belts around their waists. Nowadays they are helped in the cutting by young men under the guidance of a councillor or *inkosi*. The *Umhlanga* is then brought to *Enyokeni* the day before the ceremony.

On the morning of the ceremony, thousands of young African women gather in regimental groups of about 150. The procession is led by the chief princess who wears the gall bladder (*inyongo*) of the principal sacrificial animal which is a symbol of purity

and importance in any Zulu ritual. The princess is the first to choose an *Umhlanga*. Shouts of joy and celebration usually greet her as the reed hopefully remains intact. Thereafter, each young African woman takes it in turn to choose an *Umhlanga* five metres long. At around 10:00 the young African women move to *Enyokeni* walking a distance of about half a kilometre to the upper side of the cattle kraal situated in the middle of the royal palace. Each young African woman carries an *Umhlanga* and sings songs appropriate for the *Umhlanga* ceremony as they approach the king's palace (Nxumalo et al., 2003). The procession (See Figure 1.1) accompanied by singing and dancing, winds its way up the hill to the palace entrance where the king, flanked by his royal regiments, awaits (See Figure 1.2). As the leader of the young African women the princess kneels before the king and presents him, with her *Umhlanga*, to mark the occasion. before joining the young African women in a joyful royal tribute dance ((Nxumalo, et al., 2003).

Figure 1.1: Young African women advancing towards the Royal Zulu homestead at *Enyokeni* carrying *Umhlanga* (Andre & Rachel, 2012)



Figure 1.2: Zulu regiments standing and waiting while the Zulu king addresses the young African women after the submission of the *Umhlanga* to him (Andre & Rachel, 2012)



King Zwelithini then addresses the young women (See Figure 1.3). Usually he stresses that they are expected to look after themselves by abstaining from indulging in sexual activities prior to marriage. He asks them to preserve their virginity and also urges the adult women (the *amaqhikiza*) to nurture the young African women towards adulthood, because they still have a long way to go in life and are the parents, grandparents and leaders of tomorrow. Hence they must be aware of the threats to them and to the nation such as HIV Aids (Nxumalo, et al., 2003).

Figure 1.3: Young African women listening to King Zwelithini addressing them after they had submitted the *Umhlanga* (Andre & Rachel, 2012)



Numerous reasons have been promoted for the revival of the *Umhlanga* ceremony amongst the Zulus roughly 150 years after it was stopped by Shaka. According to Nxumalo et al., (2003) one of the reasons why the king revived the *Umhlanga* ceremony was that it is portrayed as a celebration of the Zulu nation and performed the essential role of unifying the people and the king in a public ritual. However, is not only about recovering lost Zulu identities and cultural practices towards the end of the apartheid era it is also about the king being concerned about his people and the transmission of sexual diseases. Hence he wanted young African women to be united at an early age and obtain proper nurturing from the elders about human behaviour and also to abstain from indulging in sex before marriage ((Nxumalo, et al., 2003).

As such the *Umhlanga* ceremony is as much about the king as it is about the young African women. He uses the ceremony involving young African women to unify his people. Furthermore, as the father and leader of the Zulu nation and reigning monarch

one of his duties is to sustain the culture of the Zulu people. In the process the young women must learn how to behave in front of him while he in turn demonstrated his gratitude to the people with a sacrifice to the royal ancestors on behalf of all young African women and their communities throughout the kingdom.

The endorsement and presence of the king at the *Umhlanga* ceremony is also very important as people felt motivated to support the practice and young women also were motivated to partake in the *Umhlanga* ceremony. This is done by the king linking the *Umhlanga* ceremony to a message that the future of the nation lies in the hands of young people (Harrison, Xaba, Kunene and Ntuli, 2001). As a reward not only would the young African women have the privilege of meeting the king but they also lived in hope that during the ceremony the king could choose one of them to become his wife and thus to be the queen of the Zulu nation. But the *Umhlanga* ceremony in the presence of the king, it is argued, also leads to pride amongst the young African women of their parents, their peers, the local leaders and their role as national custodians of the cultural wealth of the Zulu nation. The king for his part insists on the value of sharing the nation's historical achievements and says this strengthens peoples' resolve to live for today and strive for tomorrow (Gorshkov & Sheregi, 2010) and to ensure that the *Umhlanga* ceremony must be passed on from generation to generation. In turn the king demonstrates his gratitude with a sacrifice to the royal ancestors on behalf of all young African women and their communities throughout the Kingdom.

In the process the young African women displayed publically that they are virgins and are proud of that. It is therefore argued that the participants feel that the *Umhlanga* ceremony promotes the preservation of the self by means of order and discipline in a large rally as well as unifying them in the present and with the practices of the past (Nxumalo, et al., 2003). In the process it is argued a sexual identity and a gender identity are created that link the individual to the community and the community to the broader world. Rites of passage provide the African with the foundation of his or her being, namely identity (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). This, it is argued, provides continuity in a changing world (Nyembezi & Nxumalo, 1995) especially since urbanisation and

contact with western cultures challenges “The heritage of the Black people of Southern Africa” (Ngaloshe, 2000, p.7). Against this backdrop virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony can be viewed as a Zulu nation building and identity formation under the guidance of the king (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). Key in this process is non-formal education where senior women teach young African women how to behave and be proud of their virginity and half naked bodies. Consequently, this allows young African women to expect respect from their suitors who intend to approach them during the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Against this background many rural African women, perhaps the most marginalized group in South Africa, saw the *Umhlanga* ceremony as one of the ways to re-install self-respect, pride which promotes purity, cleanliness, expected behaviour and discipline in young African women. For the young African women who participate in virginity testing the *Umhlanga* ceremony is a portentous marker in their historical consciousness.

However, not all young African women support virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* Ceremony and the proposed advantages and have a different historical consciousness. A large number argue that virginity testing collided with what they termed modern values such as human and individual rights. These young African women are generally from urban areas and are more modernized than those who are in rural areas, because of their exposure to a western way of life. Therefore, they do not see the *Umhlanga* ceremony as the only way to re-install self-respect, pride which promotes purity, respect, cleanliness and discipline (LeClerc-Madlala, 2001). They also do not partake in the *Umhlanga* ceremony because they tend to use the Constitution of South Africa, Act, No. 108 of 1996, Chapter 2, section 9 (3) and (4) to support their views as to why they do not abide with the practice of the *Umhlanga* ceremony. They feel that the practice of this ceremony is against the law because the young African women who are found not to be virgins are excluded from the practice of the *Umhlanga* ceremony as well as from other traditional gatherings such as *Umkhosi wokweshwama* which is the harvest of the first fruits ceremony. It is thus discriminatory. They further say the right of dignity of these young African women is violated by their parents and other stakeholders of the *Umhlanga* ceremony and they are publicly humiliated.

Those who do not participate in it also remained largely skeptical and felt that virginity testing is one-sided traditional knowledge that was in conflict with scientific knowledge. Hence there is a sense of unease that a life-affirming ritual depended on a female elder's visual inspection of thighs; the back of knees; breasts; genitalia; as well as how young African women presented themselves in public. They do not believe that what was confirmed amounted to scientific evidence. This skepticism is underpinned by the knowledge that sport, insertion of tampons, or visits to the gynecologist can tamper with the 'evidence' (which is the hymen). These young African women believe that customs change over time. Moreover, their worldviews were infused with principles of science, a body of critical thought that sat uneasily with their understanding of traditional practice.

Simply put a gulf separates the past from the present in which the young African women find themselves. The reason why the young African women are therefore lacking in understanding of the *Umhlanga* ceremony now is that they are linked to wider economic, political, spiritual and religious realities that have positioned the ceremony in relation to beliefs about the human body (Omorodion, 2006) as promoted by human rights and feminists discourses that serve to challenge patriarchy.

1.3 Rationale and Motivation

Towards the end of August or September, as explained above, young African women who had successfully been tested as virgins experience unofficial history in the form of the *Umhlanga* ceremony at the *Enyokeni* palace in the presence of the Zulu king. Consequently, young African women leave school where official history is taught with the intention of participating in the *Umhlanga* ceremony which is based on the unofficial history. However, young African women who are doing Matric write their trial examination in September and some become non participants of the ceremony not because of their volition but due to their educational circumstance. Others take time out from the examination to attend the ceremony. This always causes tension between the official history based on the CAPS curriculum and textbooks that I teach in tight school

structures underpinned by the oversight of the Department of Basic Education and the unofficial history learnt outside formal school structures. This happens despite the fact that in their report the History and Archaeology Panel argued that: “We have to recognize the fact that everyone has a form of historical consciousness. This historical consciousness is not crafted on a blank slate by teachers in schools, or by professional historians in universities. It is created in and by family, the community, churches, the media and other areas of communication, interacting with individual experience. In this, the value of the formal study of history is that it aims to develop this latent consciousness into a conscious consciousness” (Department of Education, p.6, 2000).

My professional experience of female learners being absent from school during the trial exams indicated to me, as an African male history teacher, that the relationship between the learning of official and unofficial history and the creation of a historical consciousness across these two realms are not clear-cut – despite what the report of the History and Archaeology Panel says. In fact my experience was that the cultural heritage and the acknowledgement of certain African social practices such as the *Umhlanga* ceremony are not really valued by official history and the school system. To me this was a problem worth investigation. This motivated me to embark on this study to try and understand how, in an unofficial history learning context, away from curricula and textbooks, female learners acquire historical consciousness with specific reference to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Doing this study will hopefully not only help me to improve my qualifications but also prepare me in a professional and personal manner to develop a deeper understanding of the complications of learning about African social practices outside of formal education. Hopefully I can, by doing this dissertation, contribute to not only the knowledge about the *Umhlanga* ceremony but also on how learners learn about unofficial history.

1.4 Purpose and Focus of the study

The purpose of this study is to understand the historical consciousness of young African women as it relates to the practice of the *Umhlanga* ceremony which is rooted in

unofficial history. More specifically the emphasis of this study will be on how young African women acquire the historical consciousness they have towards the *Umhlanga* ceremony and why they have the consciousness that they do.

1.5 Research Methodology

The foremost aim of this section was to succinctly explain the research design and the methodology used in the study in an attempt to answer the research questions posed. This section serves as an introduction since a more detailed explanation is found in Chapter 3. A qualitative approach was adopted for this study. Therefore, this study is qualitative in nature and the interpretivist paradigm was used. A study based on a qualitative design centres' on an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Henning, 2004). This made it possible for me to gain a deep understanding of the historical consciousness of the participants, who were purposively selected. For this study I also adopted a case study design. The case in this research refers to a specific phenomenon namely the historical consciousness and the *Umhlanga* ceremony on young African women. The data was collected by means of focus group interviews, émigré comments and field notes and were analysed by means of open-coding.

1.6 Research questions

Most of the time a research project starts with research questions. De Vos (1998) states that well formulated research question cannot be easily answered prior to the collection of data. Therefore, in collecting data for this study I designed the following two research questions:

- What is the historical consciousness of young African women regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony?
- Why do young African women have the historical consciousness they have regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony?

1.7 Theoretical framework

I adopted historical consciousness as the theoretical framework for this study. Historical consciousness for my study will be defined as: “The past is my connection to the present and the future” (Rosenzweig & Thelen, p.6, 1998). A similar theorisation was adopted by Angvik (1997). To him historical consciousness is the connection of interpretations of the past, perceptions of the present and expectations of the future. It is argued that historical consciousness serves as a key orientation element that guides human activity on a daily basis. Therefore, to understand the historical consciousness of young African women towards the *Umhlanga* ceremony we need to look back right to the origin of this ceremony and how it was practiced; so that we will know why it is practiced like it is at present and with what impact. From the findings of the past and present it will be easy for us to understand the views on how it will be practiced in the future.

1.8 Route Map of the study

This research study consisted of five chapters:

➤ Chapter 1

I presented in this chapter the background to the research problem by providing a route map under the following sub-headings: Introduction of the study; background and context; rationale and motivation; purpose and focus of the study; research questions; theoretical framework and route map of the study and the conclusion. Ultimately, this chapter introduced the reader to the research problem that is under investigation.

➤ Chapter 2

In this chapter I reviewed the literature related to young African women and the *Umhlanga* ceremony as it related to their historical consciousness presented. I used a thematic approach and the major themes were: The evolution and clarification of

historical consciousness; Historical consciousness of young people; Ceremonies and rituals in unofficial history learning; the *Umhlanga* ceremony as a historical case study of acquiring historical consciousness through a ritual / ceremony; Official and unofficial history learning as it relates to developing a historical consciousness. All-in-all the purpose of the literature review was to gain an understanding of the literature related to my topic and to find a niche for my study.

➤ **Chapter 3**

In this chapter I presented the research design, methodology and appropriate methods that were employed in order to generate and interpret the data relevant to answer the research questions of this study. Qualitative research and interpretivism, as the approach and paradigm respectively, are clearly analysed in this chapter as this was used to understand the historical consciousness of young African women as related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The research was conducted through an interview process with three focus groups of young African women. Thereafter, I introduced three pairs of volunteer émigrés with the aim of gaining richer data. The data gathered were analysed by means of open-coding and the themes that emerged were used to write up the findings of the dissertation.

➤ **Chapter 4**

The aim of this chapter was the analysis of the data gathered by means of the methodology as explained in Chapter 3. This chapter covers the findings of the field work with an aim of responding in a particular way to the first research question. The explanation provided was in a narrative format and the conclusion drawn served to synchronise the argument so as to answer the first research question posed.

➤ **Chapter 5**

In this chapter, I discussed the findings of my research in relation to both the research and theoretical literature. In this chapter the second research question for this study:

Why do young African women have the historical consciousness (relationship between the past, present and future) regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony are also answered. In this chapter the study is also concluded. Some implications of the findings of the study are discussed and a thesis is proposed. The limitations of the research conducted were also explained and I reflected on the professional and personal growth I gained from doing the study.

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I orientated the reader of my study by sketching the background and context. This I did to make it easy for the reader to understand where I come from in terms of the argument I will be putting forward in this study. I also explained historical consciousness as the theoretical framework used. I also outlined the purpose and focus, rationale and motivation and research questions and methodology of the dissertation. Finally, I also provided a summary of the research study by providing an orientation of the different chapters found in this study. I will, in the next chapter review the literature relevant to the phenomena on which I am focussing in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review was conducted according to its relevance to the research study in this chapter. A literature review is a vital focal point and prerequisite for any research as it serves as a vehicle to advance the study. The literature review's instrumental function is demonstrating that all the main concepts, theories, methodological approaches relevant to the topic have been identified, understood and critically evaluated (Hart, 1998). Reviewing the literature provides an overview of current, and sometimes not so current research issues, but still sufficiently relevant to the topic. The aim for me was to be able to understand the different types of topics or themes that are important to my research study. The literature review was thus the corner stone to the study for it contributed towards a clearer understanding of the research problem that has been identified. The literature related to this study was reviewed in terms of its implication for this particular research project.

In the literature review I clarified historical consciousness as a concept as explained by Angvik (1997) and produced a theoretical framework that was used as a benchmark for the data analysis in Chapter 4. Consequently, in this chapter there is an overview of historical consciousness, cultural practices as well as cultural change as being social phenomena which is influenced and shaped by values, assumptions, beliefs and ideas of the people involved in such practices. It also proved necessary for me to reflect on post-modernism and History to understand the world inhabited marginal spaces where paradoxes, alienation and ambivalence abound. This in turn fragments meaning and the relationship between past, present and future.

I decided to use a thematic approach in order to review the research conducted in relation to historical consciousness. Kaniki (2006), states that a thematic perspective in a literature review is made up of different ideas and arguments from different schools of thought. Therefore, the aim of using a thematic approach was an attempt to identify the relevant themes and issues that emerged from the literature review and analyse it based on its relevance to this study. Much literature was consulted but only themes that were relevant to this study were critiqued. This chapter is therefore made-up of the following themes: historical consciousness; ceremonies and rituals in history and official and unofficial history learning as it relates to development of a historical consciousness.

It was essential to start this chapter by also clarifying the aim of conducting a literature review. It was significant for me to access the knowledge of what has been said or studied by other authors pertaining to the research problem I am investigating. Kaniki, (2006) spells out clearly that no research study exists in isolation, but it is the continuation of what has been undertaken by others before. Kaniki (2006) furthermore argues that the specific aims of a literature review are: identification of issues and variables related to the research topic understudy; identifying conceptual and operational definitions; identification of gaps in knowledge and the development of a research problem; the identification of a theoretical framework and finally the obvious aim of the literature review is to explore the same or different methodologies that have been used by others before which display the same problems to the study.

De Vos (1998) argues that literature is the first place in the researcher's study where he/she can show scholarly competence and grasp the important issues in the field by demonstrating the breadth and depth of reading accomplished. A literature review is therefore also a source for accumulating knowledge based on learning about previous thinking on the topic and clarifies what the researcher was grappling with while selecting the topic. As such it is a prime source for selecting a topic as it provides insights into the dimensions and complexity of the problem. It is also a powerful learning device because the process will expose the researcher to many diverse ideas which will allow him/her to learn from the successes, partial successes and failures of previous researchers.

In conclusion, Neuman (2006) states that the necessity of a literature review in a research study is similarly based on the supposition that knowledge accrues and that people learn from and build on what others have done. This means that current studies build on previous research studies and any specific research study is thus a tiny part of the overall process of creating knowledge. Hence, the reviewing of literature becomes an important step in the research process because there is a need for the study to build on existing knowledge and not merely add to the accumulation of findings on a particular topic (Creswell, 2009).

2.2. Clarification of historical consciousness

I have looked at how other authors view historical consciousness with the aim of explaining it. It is argued by Kemp (1991) that the past cannot exist as an object apart from the historical consciousness of it. This statement emphasizes the importance of historical consciousness. It implies that the past can never be brought back as a physical reality, but it exists as a mental consciousness. Historians interested in the theoretical and philosophical aspects of history have realized the importance of an understanding of the concept of historical consciousness. The term 'historical consciousness' is a compound of the words 'history' and 'consciousness'. The word history can be traced back to the Greek word 'Historia', which originally meant inquiry or research or, in its extended meaning, knowledge obtained as a result of inquiry. 'History' has since acquired several principal and subsidiary meanings. Some of the principal meanings are: events that happened in the past; written accounts of past events and the activity of historians in studying and writing and oral accounts of historical events. 'History' is sometimes linked to the mental process of thinking about the past. Historical consciousness serves as a key orientation element that gives guidance to human activity on a daily basis. Therefore, historical consciousness is a necessary prerequisite for orientation in the present. It helps people to comprehend past reality in order to grasp present reality and develop a well-balanced prediction and understanding of the

future reality. Therefore, to understand the *Umhlanga* ceremony we need to revisit the origin of the ceremony and see how it was practiced, so that we will know why it is practiced like it is in the present. From the findings of the past and present it will be possible to gaze into the future. Research informs us that virginity testing is the epistemology of the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Therefore, virginity testing will also reflect in this study, but it will not be foregrounded but merely touched upon as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

Lee (1997) argues that historical consciousness cannot guarantee democrats, patriots, or even anti-racists, because the past is complex and does not sanctify any particular social or personal position above another. For him, the goal of 'historical consciousness' is to help teachers and young people to enhance their historical thinking skills, that is to think critically about the past or to be familiar with the nature of history as an academic discipline, its methods and findings. Such an approach to school history, proponents of historical consciousness argue, is necessary in order for young people to move away from passive rote learning and in developing their own social, political, and historical orientations (Seixas, 1997).

Lee (2004) attempted to develop an idea of what constitutes historical consciousness. Lee's research was inspired by Rösen's theoretical approach to historical consciousness as well as pertinent empirical data relating to what historical consciousness may seem to suggest. These ideas around historical consciousness gave rise to conflict and debate concerning what young people should be taught regarding history and what they should be able to achieve and do. As a result some educationists argued that historical skills and understanding of the discipline are more important than learning content, whilst another groups argued that learning historical learning content is more beneficial than skills and understanding. This conflict of ideas, dealing with the dualism of what young people know in relation to what young people can do, encapsulates the arguments of Ravitch (1989) and Wineburg (1991) related to historical consciousness respectively.

A different perspective was provided by Taylor (2003). He identified historical literacy as a systematic process with a particular set of skills, attitudes and conceptual understandings that mediate and develop historical consciousness. In the view of Taylor (2003) historical literacy could therefore be seen as knowing historical content and providing the skills and necessary knowledge to deal with the past and develop a consciousness. Using the appropriate content, skills and concepts would facilitate a process of understanding the past which would lead to a sense of personal empowerment for young people. Taylor (2003) felt that young people should be able to, on account of being historically literate, employ the historian's skills through the use of historical reasoning, synthesis and interpretation to explain historical events.

Additionally, Taylor (2003) also emphasises that it is not about purposeless knowing of facts about the past but it is about personal, social and political empowerment. Understanding the past is an important part of life as a whole, not just school life, and all school students are entitled to study or know history. It must be based upon a judicious balance between social expectations about what young people should know about history and individual understanding and skills. The argument here is that all young people may attain some form of historical consciousness (Taylor, 2003).

Furthermore, Taylor (2003) proposes six important components of historical literacy which characterise the conceptualisation of historical consciousness:

Figure 2.1: Components of historical literacy (Taylor, 2003)

Knowledge of the past	Knowing and understanding events of the past
Historical skills	Narratives of the past & Research skills
Historical explanation	Causation and motivation
Historical concepts	Making connections with the past
History language	Moral and value-judgements
Representational expression	Contention and contestability

Lee (2004) also proposed that historical consciousness is achieved by being considered historically literate in the areas of linking the past, present and future as well as making

connections with the past. The position adopted by Taylor in this regard is synonymous with Wineburg's (1991) process of reading history and interrogating sources so as to act like historians. Hereby, young people are required to know and understand historical events and subsequently the importance thereof to be considered historically conscious. Historical consciousness therefore plays a vital role in young people's lives and could be broadly seen as a fountain of knowledge of sorts. The knowledge and application of skills as outlined above could be seen as the goal to attain historical consciousness.

Therefore, for young people to be considered historically conscious they should be able to understand how history is constructed. Historically conscious young people need to act like historians by gathering, interpreting and analysing primary and secondary sources; research skills explain problem-solving skills, comprehensive skills and predictive skills. Consequently, young people should be able to make an informed decision to be successful in attaining historical consciousness (Husbands, 1996). This should be done by evaluated sources and by accrediting certain questions for interrogating sources. Thus, young people need to be able to reason, synthesize and interpret sources to explain historical events. Ultimately, historical understanding gives rise to a form of historical consciousness.

In relation to historical consciousness being the linking of the past, present and future Rauche (1990) stated that historical consciousness is an awareness of a person's current socio-political position being conditioned by a string of historical events in the past and events of a cultural, social and political nature. Rüsen (1993) argued that historical consciousness is the general category that deals, not only with the learning and teaching of history, but covers every form of historical thinking. Through historical consciousness one experiences the past and interprets it as history. This encapsulates historical studies, as well as the use and function of history in private and public life.

It is also further proposed by Toshchenko (2011) that historical consciousness is a collection of ideas, views, concepts, feelings and sentiments that reflect the perception and evaluation of the past. This relates to what is inherent and characteristic of a

society as a whole, of its diverse socio-demographic, socio-occupational, and ethno-social groups and of individuals. Historical consciousness is therefore also an expression of organization, preservation and replication of the past experiences of nationality, country or state for potential utilization in human activity or for the relocation of its influence into the sphere of public awareness (Tosh, 1984). Historical consciousness consequently reflects the particular significance and current relevance of information about the past in close association with the present and the future.

A different perspective is provided by Seixas (2004) who proposes that historical consciousness is a specific cultural development located in the modern era. Its achievement is the full awareness of the history of everything present and relative of all opinions and thus the breaking of the hold of tradition.

A similar position, be it adopted much earlier, was taken by Angvik (1997). To him historical consciousness is the connection of interpretations of the past, perceptions of the present and expectations of the future. Therefore, it is a human-made construction that helps making sense out of the past in a narrative manner and providing for orientation of the own life in the changes from the past to the future. Hence, historical consciousness in his view plays a prominent role in young people in shaping their life style. It is important to point out that the content of historical consciousness relates to each of the following three elements i.e. (past, present and future) and with the relationship amongst them. Figure (2.2) illustrates this relationship between the past actuality, present actuality and the future actuality:

Figure 2.2: Elements of historical consciousness and their relation (Angvik, 1997)

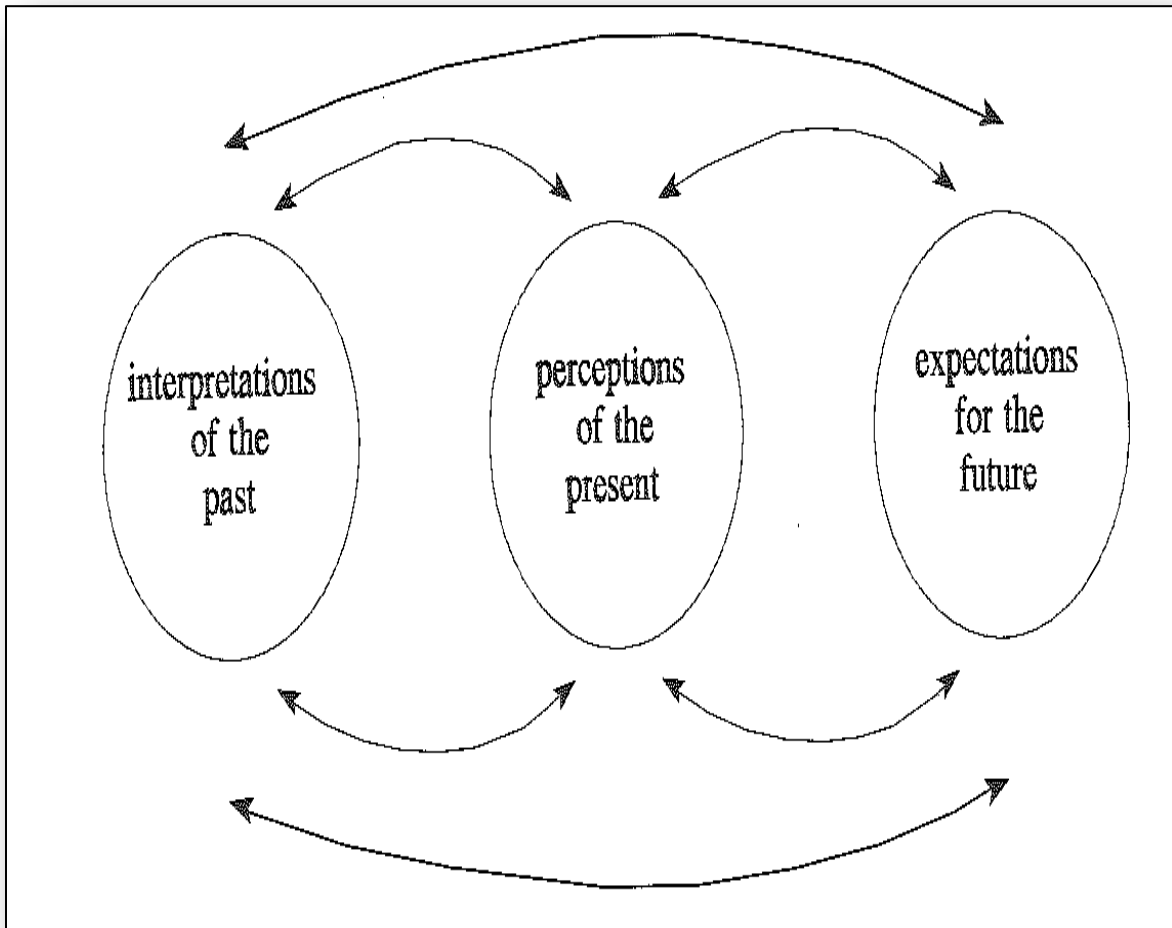


Figure 2.2 reveals that everybody has knowledge of the past which may have been formed in many different ways – be it our interpretations of what we experienced ourselves or learnt from others. This is a reflection of the historical consciousness of professional historians, adults as well as young people. Every generation rewrites history but it is also reasonable to say that in the same generation history is interpreted differently. Everybody has some kind of understanding of the time he/she is living in: the surroundings, life, society, nature or however one would describe it. This understanding can be more or less developed and coherent. It can be connected via isolated phenomena or entireties. The understanding of the present as a result differs from person to person and from group to group because it reflects people's social opinion,

human views, feeling for nature and so forth. In a democratic country, such as South Africa where this study is taking place, it is most acceptable that people have different ways of understanding the present (Angvik, 1997).

Historians have sometimes been pre-occupied with the connection between the past and the future (Heilbroner, 1995). There are reasons why in the contemporary world this pre-occupation is particularly resonant. Furedi (1992) suggests that anxiety about the direction of the future has stimulated a scramble to appropriate the past and he describes attempts by governments and elites throughout the world to reinvent national histories.

A significant aspect that stands out in this bond between past, present and future is about historical time or historical distance. In the view of historians such as Tosh, (1984) historical consciousness could be perceived as a way of seeing the past that rejects distance. He explains that historical consciousness clarifies the past so as to infuse it with present day purposes. This means that the primary concern of the historical consciousness initiative is with the representation or domestication of the past and not really about a systematic study of earlier events. Why and how it happened are thus not always relevant questions for the historical consciousness practitioners. Rather the interest is to recreate the events of the past such that these events can forever be implanted in the long term memories of people. Historical consciousness is always a phenomenon of the present like a pledge that ties us to the eternal present (Tosh, 1984).

Historical consciousness also looks at the difference between memories, whether individual or collective and the disciplined approach towards the past that characterizes an awareness of history. All groups have a sense of the past, but they tend to use it to reinforce their own beliefs and sense of identity. Like human memory, collective or social memory can be faulty, distorted by factors such as sense of tradition or else a belief in progress through time (Tosh, 1984). Thus, historical consciousness encompasses important and random events and absorbs both systematized information (largely through the educational system), and disorganized information (through the

mass media, unofficial history and fiction). The essence and content of historical knowledge is therefore an aggregate of ideas, views, concepts, feelings, and sentiments that reflect the perception and evaluation of the past in all the variety inherent in, and characteristic of, society as a whole, of its diverse socio-demographic, socio-occupational, and ethno-social groups and individuals. Personal interests determine the relative weight given to these factors. No small role in the functioning of historical consciousness belongs to random information, often mediated by the culture of those in the person's immediate circle and family and, to a certain extent, by traditions and customs, which are also vehicles for certain views on national life, the country, and the state (Toshchenko, 2011).

Historical consciousness is moreover viewed by Marcus (1980) as people's peculiar power to project a self-reflective temporal sensibility upon the world around them and to transfer the temporal organization of his own experiences to the ordering of the collective life of the community. The basic temporal dimensions of historical thought - origins and development, growth and decline, rise and fall, continuity and process, being and becoming - are all extrapolations from this self-reflection and personal memory. The primary function of historical consciousness in the view of Marcus (1980) is to provide a frame of reference for the integration and valuation of experiences as it relates to the past, present and future. Furthermore, it provides intimation of meaning in things and of purpose to life for the individual, while it furnishes the community with a unifying value orientation and the continuity of its identity. Historical consciousness provides insight into the 'relatedness' of things in the perspective of their participation in the continuum of time. Historical consciousness is founded upon a dialectical awareness of the relationship between human actuality, human potentiality and awareness that present events are meaningful against a larger vision of what a person has been and what he can become.

Taylor and Young, (2003) described historical consciousness as the process by which certain events and their stories do or do not enter into the collective memory as public history or family stories. Historical consciousness, or this collective memory, is

inextricably linked with political and social action in any society. On the other hand history, as with historical consciousness, deals with events of the past but in difference to historical consciousness history centres on the historicity of such events – that the events happened then not now. In other words, history reconnoitres and clarifies the past as it grows opaque over time (Phillips, 1998). The importance of the time and distance factor in history is also made evident by Spiegel (no date) to the extent that memory reincarnates, resurrects, re-cycles and makes the past reappear alive again in the present. However, it cannot perform historically since it refuses to keep the past in the past, to draw the line that is constitutive of the modern enterprise of historiography (Seixas, 2004).

The notion of diverse communities within nations, and the long-term and short-term memories of those communities are issues examined by Sharon Macdonald (2000). She looked at how memories can play tricks with 'taboo' periods of history. These taboos can play a key part in creating national or communal identities, and can influence political and possibly military action even today. Historical consciousness can exclude, as David Lowenthal (quoted by Lorentzen, 2000, p.59) argues: "History and heritage transmit different things to different audiences. History tells all who will listen what has happened and how things came to be as they are. Heritage passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose. History is enlarged by being disseminated; heritage is diminished and despoiled by export." Van der Leeuw affirms this view: "The wish to develop a national consciousness of the past also entails a third problem. The building of such consciousness is very much based on those elements that made the nation or state unique, rather than on those elements which were shared with neighbours or other nations. As a consequence, pupils were and are taught about national particularities, even though these may in fact be regional or even global experiences" (Macdonald, 2000, pp.86-102).

Historical consciousness can also be regarded as a universal psychological attribute depending more on experience than on instinct. Thus life cannot be lived without the consciousness of a personal past. All societies have a collective memory of experience

that is drawn on for a sense of identity and a sense of direction. To understand our social arrangements we need to have some notion of where we come from. In that sense all societies possess memory (Seixas, 2004). Historical consciousness also serves as a key orientation element that guides human activity on a daily basis. This is so since history is a science that gives meaning to the interactions between past, present and future. Historical consciousness is therefore a necessary prerequisite for orientation in a present situation. This implies that future time is contained in the historical interpretation of the present, because such interpretation enables the facilitation of the direction of intentions (Tosh, 1984).

Tosh (1984) proposes that historical consciousness depends on moral values which are learnt from home, community as well as in society. These values are the general principles, guidelines for behaviour, key ideas or perspectives that suggest what should be done in a given situation where various options exist. Such values function as a source of arbitration between differences and as objectives guiding us when we act. Young people's perspectives shape action systematically, acknowledging the social relationship in which they live and have to decide upon a course of action to be taken. These perspectives express social relationships as an obligation, addressing the core of young people's subjectivity and calling upon a sense of responsibility and conscience (Seixas, 2004).

Historical consciousness also serves to organize ideas, giving meaning and structure to young people's thoughts. In so doing historical consciousness offers the prospect of integrating a wide range of ways in which young people position themselves in time by taking account of their past. Young people's ideas about the nature and the status of historical consciousness, evidence, understanding, explanation, time and change frame the way in which they make sense of the past. The historical practice of young people's history today is no longer seen as a single undifferentiated social category. Class, race and cultural beliefs about sexual difference have, for example, influence on how the world is perceived and also on how young people perceive themselves (Tosh, 1984).

Ultimately, I personally feel that historical consciousness is the foundation that gives young people a sense of belonging and direction towards adulthood. It is also a process which links with political and social action in any society. Through historical consciousness young people develop a sense of the past in a personal, informal and unstructured fashion. They frequently encounter the past outside school – in the family, in the community and in various cultural interactions, such as film, media and visits to museums. These experiences are often interesting, vivid and connected to young people.

Consequently, I used the *Umhlanga* ceremony in this study as an example of a ceremony which serves as a vehicle to transmit historical consciousness to young African women and also develop the understanding to know themselves accordingly. The *Umhlanga* ceremony would help me to see how historical consciousness is acquired by young African women in order to comprehend past actuality, present actuality and develop the future actuality. After all: “The past is your connection to the present and the future. Why I am like I am? To find out why I am like I am, I must talk to my grandparents, look up published family genealogies, go through state and federal records and consult computer database, in order to find out what direction I am coming from and what direction I am heading to” (Rosenzweig, 1998, p.6). Therefore, to understand the *Umhlanga* ceremony I needed to return to the origin of the ceremony and see how it was practiced, so that I would know why it is practiced as it is now. Concurrently, the literature review displayed that historical consciousness has been and is still observed from dissimilar perspectives in different contexts, different spaces, times and different motives.

According to Cohen and Manion (1980) the interpretivists’ knowledge is socially constructed. They further state that the central endeavour in the interpretivist context is to understand the subjective world of human experiences. Therefore, I tried to understand the complex world of the historical consciousness of young African women from their point of view.

2.3 Ceremonies in unofficial history learning

This study is also about the learning of and about ceremonies and rituals. In the view of Rubin, "... rituals encapsulate the fundamental explanatory conundrum of any approach to human behaviour, for in order for it to work it must be rule-bound and a fair degree of shared knowledge must be contained within. But it is open to rearrangements, redesign and interpretation by every ritual actor and observer" (Rubin, cited in Cannadine, p.86, 2002). Ceremonies, like rituals, play a central role in African socialization, demarking the different stages in an individual's development, as well as that person's relationship and role in the broader community. The major stage in African life is the transition from childhood to adulthood when a young person becomes fully institutionalized to the ethics of the group's culture. Rites of passage, like the *Umhlanga* ceremony in the case of this study, are for this reason critical in nation building and identity formation (Leclerc-Madlala, 2001).

Schlegel (1980) shared that various characteristics of ceremonies are coded separately for young men and young women worldwide. Ceremonies are more often present for young women than for young men, especially in societies at a low level of technological development. Consequently, sex differentiation is emphasized in initiation ceremonies. For example - among the Zulu, birth, puberty, marriage, and death are all celebrated and marked by the ritual and ceremonial slaughter of sacrificial animals (i.e. cow or goat depending on the affordability) to the ancestors. Birth and puberty are particularly celebrated. To Zulu traditionalists, childlessness and giving birth to girls only are the greatest of all misfortunes. No marriage is permanent until a child, especially a boy, is born (Nxumalo et al., 2003).

LeClerc-Madlala (2001) argued that some rituals are informed by rites of passage which play a central role in African socialization, marking the different stages in an individual's development (gender and otherwise), as well as that person's relationship and role in the broader community. The major stage according to her in African life is the transition from child to adult when young people become fully institutionalized to the ethics of the

group's culture. Rites of passage are for this reason critical for history, in addition to the recurrent daily and seasonal patterns of African life and community, great ritual distinction is placed on the non-recurring moments of personal life. These moments, which have been happening since the beginning of time, mark times of new beginning and transition from one life stage to another for the individual while highlighting the social symbols that give the community its identity and integrate the person into a larger sphere of meaning. The puberty ceremony for young women is a case in point.

The puberty ceremony (*umemulo*) allows for the transition to full adulthood. It involves separation from other people for a period to mark the changing status from youth to adulthood. This is followed by "reincorporation," characterized by the ritual killing of animals, dancing, and feasting. After the ceremony, the girl is declared ready for marriage. The courting days then begin. The girl may take the first step by sending a 'love letter' to a young man who appeals to her. Zulu love letters are made of beads where different colours have different meanings, and certain combinations carry particular messages. Dating occurs when a young man visits or writes a letter to a woman telling her how much he loves her. Once a woman decides that she loves this man, she can tell him so. It is only after they have both agreed that they love each other that they may be seen together in public. Young African women's ceremonies generally used to coincide with their first menstruation which was a visible sign of physical maturity and it is still the same even today (Nxumalo et al, 2003).

The rituals and ceremonies touched upon under this theme all incorporated learning about history – in an unofficial manner. This theme will be explored in the next section.

2.4 Unofficial history learning as it relates to historical consciousness

This appropriation of the past makes sense only when considering that history has been subject to the same forces of consumerism and consumption experienced in various aspects of economic, social and cultural life, most commonly associated with the postmodern condition (Lyotard, 1984). This reflects itself not only in the growing interest

in heritage, museums, and local history, but also in the ways in which competing forces have attempted to lay claim to 'official' histories and in so doing acknowledged the existence of 'unofficial' histories. One of these 'unofficial' histories, the *Umhlanga* ceremony, forms the subject of this research study. Such unofficial histories are not learnt about in schools but outside of school.

It is argued that young people have a strong sense of the past even before they start school. They learn the language of time and change through nursery rhymes, stories, family anecdotes and other sources. Young people bring to the history learning process their own social and emotional worlds, together with images and ideas about the past. These act as filters through which new information learnt in school as official history is sifted, and either integrated into existing frames of reference or rejected. They also brings assumptions about human experience, motivation and behaviour which Lee (1984) refers to as 'intuitions' or ideas young people use to make sense of everyday life. These ideas are the building blocks of history learning and help young people to decide what counts as significant and useable knowledge about the past.

Researchers have recently begun to investigate what young people think about the history they encounter at school and elsewhere, and how they construct a 'useable past' that helps them to create their identity and place in the world. Phillips, (1998) indicate that some students reject school history, preferring family and community stories because they perceive that the latter is more useful. The 'official history' taught in schools and the 'unofficial histories' which influence young people in the community, in the media and through the heritage industry are thus involved in a symbiotic tussle. The powerful images gained outside the 'official' environment have profound implications for the ways in which young people are influenced and socialized Phillips, (1998). The research done by Phillips (1998) provides ample evidence that young people arrive in the history classroom with their own versions of the past, and views about the importance of particular events and people. This is drawn from home, community, popular culture and the media. In order to make sense of their own learning experiences, young people attempt to reconcile these understandings about the world

with the ideas and materials teachers require them to master. Where students' informal knowledge is excluded from official histories in classroom conversation and debate, reconciliation often fails to occur, and history learning becomes, at best, a matter of mastery.

Although school history can be seen as the main way young people learn about the past, many acquire their knowledge from a variety of alternative 'unofficial' sources: media, museums, family experiences and memories, historical fiction, film, and public celebrations. Numerous and conflicting versions of the past compete for attention in the public domain. Social movements, political parties, local groups and individuals all write, rewrite and use history to meet personal and collective needs to define personal or group identity, and link past and present circumstance to achieve particular ends and futures. Young people often encounter a tension between these 'vernacular' versions of the past (lived experiences of specific communities and groups), and 'official' histories found in official curriculum documents. Regularly, young peoples' own histories relate stories that run counter to official treatments of the past, and offer powerful and alternative insights into the social realities of people's lives. 'Unofficial' histories also may have the immediacy and power to exert a crucial influence on young peoples' perceptions of the past. Consequently, when young people enter the history classroom they enter with a complex bag of images and ideas about both history and the past imported from the outside world, and modified by their own dispositions and beliefs about the purpose and uses of history (Phillips, 1998).

Unofficial history is thus the total opposite of official history learnt in school. It is not structured and it is learnt through word of mouth from grandparents; parents; peers; and from the community at large. This kind of history is also learnt in the form of ceremonies and rituals. These 'unofficial histories' are crucial in the creation of individual and collective identities. Young people develop a sense of the past in a personal, informal, unstructured and constructivist fashion, as well as in the formalised setting of a school. They frequently encounter the past outside school – in the family, in the community and in various cultural interactions, such as film, media and visits to museums. These

experiences are often interesting, vivid and connected to the young people (Phillips, 1998). Crucial in all of this is the relationship between the 'official' and the 'unofficial' consumption of the past by young people, a relationship which, has a potentially profound set of implications for the ways in which the nation and ceremonies and traditions are imagined (Anderson, 1991; McKiernan, 1993).

Respect for tradition is sometimes confused with a sense of history, because it involves affection for the past or some of it and a desire to remain faithful with it. However, there is very little of the historical that appeals to tradition. “In the view of Tosh, following the path laid down by the ancestors has a great deal to be said for it in communities that neither experience change nor expect it; for them present and past can scarcely be distinguished” (p.13, 1984). That is why respect for tradition contributed so much to the cohesion of understanding of social practices such as ceremonies. In any society with a dynamic of social or cultural change, as indicated by external trade or social hierarchy or political institutions, an uncritical respect for tradition is counterproductive. Traditionalism is the distortion of historical awareness, because it eliminates the central notion of development over time. Other distortions are more difficult to explain. Therefore, one that has huge influence is social practices. Like tradition, social practices are backward-looking, but instead of denying the fact of historical change, they interprets it in one direction only – as change for the worse (Tosh, 1984).

It is thus clear from the literature reviewed that the learning of unofficial history exists powerfully alongside official history and that these two are reliant on each other. In many ways the learning of unofficial history which happens, for example, at home and in the community is much more powerful than that learnt in school and thus brings the two into conflict. One of the ways in which the learning of unofficial history takes place is via ceremonies such as the *Umhlanga* ceremony which blends tradition which provides a very different view of history than that learnt in school.

2.6 Postmodernism and History

In the light of context that young African women find themselves in, that is a world situated between modernity and tradition, it is also necessary to reflect on postmodernism as a means to contextualise their historical consciousness. The intention of this is to elucidate how historical consciousness is extracted from the reality as well as how it influences the behaviour, thinking and reasoning of the people.

According to Klages (p.1, 2012), "Postmodernism is a complicated term, or set of ideas, one that has only emerged as an area of academic study since the mid-1980s. Postmodernism is hard to define, because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study, including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology. It is hard to locate it temporally or historically, because it is not clear exactly when postmodernism begins. Perhaps the easiest way to start thinking about postmodernism is by thinking about modernism, the movement from which postmodernism seems to grow or emerge."

The ways that modern societies go about creating categories labelled as "order" or "disorder" has to do with the effort to achieve stability. Lyotard (1988) equates that stability with the idea of "totality," or a totalized system. Totality, stability and order, Lyotard (1988), argues are maintained in modern societies through the means of "grand narratives" or "master narratives," which are stories a culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs. Every belief system or ideology has its grand narratives (Lyotard, 1988). A "grand narrative" in American culture might be the story that democracy is the most enlightened or rational form of government, and that democracy can and will lead to universal human happiness. In the same vein, having to participate in the Umhlanga Ceremony as young African women can be viewed as a grand narrative of sorts. Grand narratives can be thought of as a kind of meta-theory, or meta-ideology, that is, an ideology that explains an ideology (as with Marxism for example) - a story that is told to explain the belief systems that exist. Lyotard, (1988) argues that all aspects of modern society depend on these grand narratives.

Postmodernism then is the critique of these grand narratives, the awareness that such narratives serve to mask the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social organization or practice. In other words, every attempt to create "order" always demands the creation of an equal amount of "disorder," but a "grand narrative" masks the constructedness of these categories by explaining that "disorder" really is chaotic and bad, and that "order" really is rational and good. Postmodernism, in rejecting grand narratives, favours "mini-narratives," stories that explain small practices, local events, rather than large-scale universal or global concepts. Postmodern "mini-narratives" are always situational, provisional, contingent, and temporary, making no claim to universality, truth, reason, or stability.

Postmodernism is often realized with the following characteristics (Flax, p.41, 1990 as cited in Klages, 2012):

- An emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity in writing; an emphasis on HOW seeing (or reading or perception itself) takes place, rather than on WHAT is perceived. An example of this would be stream-of-consciousness writing.
- A movement away from the apparent objectivity provided by omniscient third-person narrators, fixed narrative points of view, and clear-cut moral positions.
- A blurring of distinctions between genres.
- An emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives, and random-seeming collages of different materials.
- A tendency toward reflexivity, or self-consciousness, about the production so that each piece calls attention to its own status as a production, as something constructed and consumed in particular ways.

According to Klages (2012), postmodernism reject boundaries between high and low forms of art and rigid genre distinctions, emphasizing pastiche, parody, bricolage, irony, and playfulness. Postmodernism also serves as a reaction of the radical changes the world underwent after the end of World War II. However, the modernist authors usually displayed the world as fragmented, troubled and the edge of disaste. Furthermore, postmodernism is concerned with questions of the organization of knowledge. In modern societies, knowledge was equated with science, and was contrasted to narrative; science was good knowledge, and narrative was bad, primitive, irrational (and thus associated with women, children, primitives, and insane people). Knowledge is good for its own sake; one gained knowledge through education in order to be knowledgeable in general to become an educated person (Klages, 2012). This is the ideal of the liberal arts education. In a postmodern society, however, knowledge becomes functional you learn things not to know them, but to use that knowledge (Jenkins, 2009).

According to Jenkins (2009) history is always written by the victors in a modernist meta-narrative manner. However, he feels that historical thinking always tends to justify the present power configuration by affording privilege to the course of the actual. Jenkins further argues that history is mainly concerned with the actual rather than with what might-have-been. In the view of Berkhofer, (1995) cited in Jenkins, (p, 73, 2009) “historical practice permits historians to assert their power over readers by creating the illusion of their omniscience of the real without substance.” Jenkins, (2009) proposes that a postmodernism theory of history is often seen through the relativistic doubts concerning objectivity. Postmodernism is an anti-realm which maintains that the past cannot be the object of historical knowledge. The historical knowledge-claims of any relationship to the actual past in a postmodernism sense dissolves history into a species of literature and makes the past itself into nothing more than a text. Postmodernist writers often tell stories about the past that seem to hope and believe are true and consistent with facts. However, Zagorin (1998) explains that history has shown itself to be resistant and accommodating to postmodernist trends. He explains that he read historical books and articles in different fields from the well-known academic historians

and felt that in several areas, such as women's studies, social history and cultural and intellectual history, a number of scholars have been receptive to postmodernist conceptions of language and discourse. This has led to an expansion of the historical horizon to involve the histories of women, racial and ethnic minorities and all kinds of marginalized or (Jenkins, 2009).

This is the case since as Jenkins (2009) has proposed people always depend on past occurrences to inform the present. The space between the past and the present makes it possible for a change in the behaviour, thinking and reasoning of people and how they do things. Jenkins (p.5-6, 2009) states that many historians view the past as acts of memory operating through social institutions and practices, like the Umhlanga Ceremony, which collectively provide the next generation with various identities. Jenkins (p.14, 2009) further argues that in the process people can become aware and starts to divorce him or herself from the academic historians who know that something was not convincing about the knowledge claims made for their historical representations. Hence in a postmodernists sense, "... history was intent not just to derail the train of thought and imagination characterized as modernist, but to shunt it into the sidings where it could peacefully pass away unmourned and soon unremembered, an interesting experiment of timing and politicizing time through a peculiar type of historicization" (Jenkins, p.15, 2009).

In the light of the above postmodernism has encouraged historians to look more closely at documents and think about texts and narratives in new ways. It has in the process assisted in opening-up new areas for research. It also acquires historians to interrogate their own methods and procedures as never before and in the process and has also made them to be more self-critical. Postmodernism has a strong emphasis on the acknowledgement of historians' own subjectivity which can enable the reader to conduct a critical assessment of historical work. Zagorin, (p.81, 2000) states that "to understand the past human actions, thoughts, beliefs, values, institutions, politics, cultures, social relationships, environments and changes that have occurred in them and in human societies as a whole with a passage of time." An informed reader regards history as

consists of arguments, footnotes of documentation and justification, acknowledgements of what is not known, discussions and evaluations of sources and evidence and critiques of the views of other scholars.

By discarding "grand narratives" (like the liberation of the entire working class) and focusing on specific local goals (such as improved day care centres for working mothers in your own community), postmodernism offers a way to theorize local situations as fluid and unpredictable, though influenced by global trends. Hence the motto for postmodern politics might well be "think globally, act locally" and don't worry about any grand scheme or master plan is applicable to this study (Jenkins, 2009).

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter I provided an overview of the various perspectives on historical consciousness, ceremonies and rituals and the learning of unofficial history as it relates to ceremonies and rituals. I have shared that historical consciousness is the connection between the past, the present and the future (Angvik, 1997). It is also clear that historical consciousness is greatly influenced by social behaviour which facilitates the learning of unofficial history. In the next chapter I unpack the research design, methodology and methods used to analyse historical consciousness in the sample groups in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the discussion of the research design and methodology which was adopted for this study. In this chapter I also elucidate how I engaged with the research design and methodology so as to provide possible answers to the research questions under study. Researchers tend to cloud the research design and research methodology (Mouton, 2001). Moreover, Mouton, (2001) regards the research design and research methodology as two different aspects which need to be separated when one engage them in the research project. In this chapter I used the ideas which originate from these two aspects of research in order to separate and explain them why I used them in this study.

My research design can be seen as a route map that will fundamentally steer the research in a particular direction provided that I, as the researcher, have planned thoroughly and followed the design diligently. (Bless, 1995) provides the following definition of a research design: “The plan of how to proceed in determining the nature of the relationship between variables is called a research design.” (Creswell, 2003) explains that the purpose of the research design is to generalize from a sample of a population, so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behaviour of this population. I have chosen a research design for my study that will assist me in obtaining data from the sample population and allow me to focus on the exact phenomena under consideration namely the historical consciousness of young African women as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

Mouton, (2001) argued that the research design can be compared with a plan that has been approved to build a house. The plan starts with an idea which has been

conceptualised by the prospective home owners and these ideas are translated into a blueprint which the architect will use to actualise the home owner's visions - the end result. In building a house, the first thing to be done is to design a plan for the house. For example, builders before they can erect any structure or building need a plan which would assist them as they carry on with building. Consequently, for my research study the plan I used was a research design. This design helped me to make sure that the study itself meets the desired purpose and also that the research can be completed with the available resources. (Durrheim, 2002) states that the research design helps with providing a plan which serves as a point of reference to the researcher along the way when conducting research so as to see possible answers to the research questions posed. This plan should encompass more than one decision on how data should be acquired and analysed in order to get to the desired answers of the research questions.

In terms of the metaphor used above the research methodology is the process of building the house by using diverse methods and tools to perform the different tasks that are necessary. In the likeness of a building project the process of implementing the plan, including the different methods and tools used to perform different tasks, would be the methodology. The research methodology can be seen as an assemblage of tools to execute the plan or route map. (Mounton, 2001) encapsulates the difference between the two research aspects by stating that while the research design focuses on the end product, that is, what kind of study is being planned and what kind of result is aimed at, while research methodology on the other hand focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used.

(Durrheim, 2002) noted that the research design links the research questions to the execution of the research is developed in the research methodology. It is here that the researcher describes how he/she will undertake gathering the data to address the research questions. This implies that the research design and methodology are inter linked in a manner that the research design could be the umbrella that accommodates the methodology.

In terms of my study both the research design and research methodology were used in this study to obtain the desired aims of the research study which is to understand the historical consciousness of young African women of the selected sample group. I did all this by employing the interpretive paradigm, a qualitative approach, the sample choice and ethical considerations. Therefore, in this chapter the research design has been outlined together with what was envisioned for this study as well as a demonstration of how the research was executed methodologically in order to answer the research questions.

Ultimately, my aim with this research is to give a perspective of historical consciousness and to analyse it by providing insight into the historical consciousness of young African women.

3.2 The research design

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

According to (Cohen & Manion, 1980) the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experiences. Researchers working within the interpretive paradigm believe that it is people who define the meanings of particular situations. According to Blanche “Interpretivist research methods try to describe and interpret people’s feelings and experiences in human terms” (Blanche & Kelly, 2002). The aim of interpretive research is to offer a perspective of a situation and to analyse it under study to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people, young African women in this study, make sense of their situation. Moreover, an interpretivist attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. The interpretive paradigm aims to understand and describe meaningful social action thus, this type of research is flexible and steered by a set of views, beliefs and opinions of the world and how it should be interpreted and studied ((Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The interpretive paradigm resonates with the qualitative research approach adopted – see further down. The link between the qualitative research approach and the interpretive paradigm is emphasized by (Steven, Schade, Chalk, & Slein, 1993) who propose that research carried out in the interpretive paradigm is generally qualitative in nature. This paradigm accepts that people have subjective experiences that must be taken seriously and the best way to understand these experiences is by relating with them and listening to what they say. Therefore, (Blanche & Kelly, 2002) believe that qualitative research techniques are the most suitable to do this task. The core of the interpretive paradigm is to seek to produce a descriptive analysis that emphasizes deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena ((Henning, 2004). As a result, this study attempted to produce rich descriptions of the characteristics, processes, transactions and contexts that constitute the historical consciousness of young African women as the phenomena under study.

Three important descriptions of the interpretive paradigm are proposed by ((Steven, et al., 1993). Firstly, that knowledge is produced inductively and concepts and theories emerge from the interpretation of phenomena. Furthermore, that data collected are interpreted by the researcher and have a high degree of partiality. Lastly, that research within this paradigm is carried out in the contexts in which phenomena occur. This study took into consideration the vague nature of historical consciousness. In the previous chapter, the literature reviewed had revealed the fact that historical consciousness has been, and is still viewed from different perspectives in different contexts, different spaces and times and for or with different motives. Therefore, the previous chapter produced a framework for understanding the phenomena theoretically, especially with regard to its application in this study. It is in the context of this framework that this study was carried out.

In the light of the above the interpretive paradigm is a view of social life that is created and sustained through interactions and conduct (Popkewitz, 1984). One of the basic assumptions of this paradigm is that all human action is meaningful and that it has to be

understood and interpreted within the context in which the action takes place. As a result the following assumptions were applied in this study:

➤ **Human life can only be understood from within:** In terms of an epistemological point of view the interpretivist paradigm focuses on people's subjective experiences, on how people construct the social world by sharing meanings and how they interact with or relate to each other. When one is studying a topic, research techniques are used in order to understand how people interpret and interact within their social environment ((Maree, 2007). According to (Robson, 2002) social construction of reality implies that there are many ways of seeing the world, perceptions may never stay the same but will change. There is no objective reality that can be known, but there are multiple realities.

➤ **Social life is a distinctively human product:** Interpretivists assume that reality is not objectively determined but is socially constructed ((Husserl, 1965). Regarding the nature of knowledge that is epistemology, in the interpretive paradigm knowledge is socially constructed by those in the research process and the duty of the researcher is to understand the complex experience from the point of view and in the case of my study (Robson, 2002) of the young African women regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The underlying assumption is that by placing people in their social contexts there is a greater opportunity to understand the perceptions they have of their own activities and experiences. The uniqueness of a particular situation is important to understand and interpret the meanings constructed (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

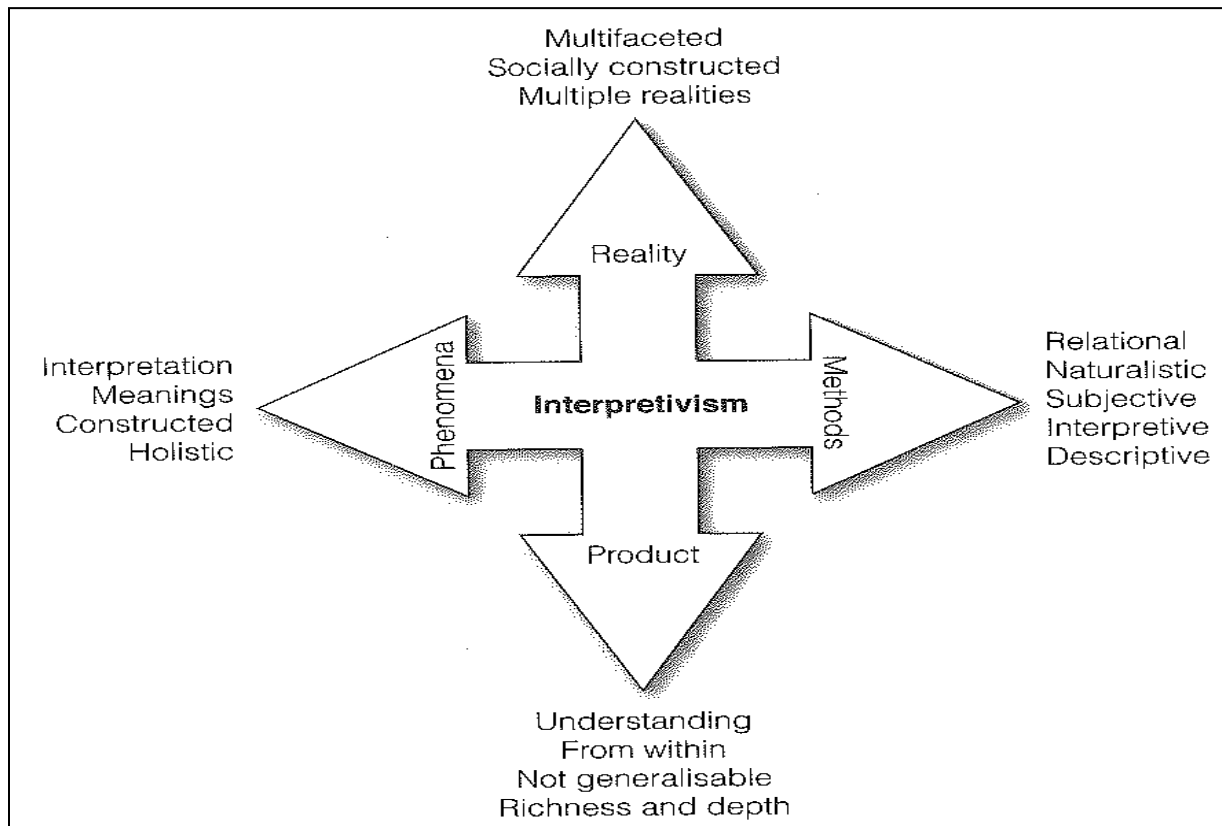
➤ **The human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning:** By exploring the richness, depth and complexity of phenomena I can begin to develop a sense of understanding of the meanings imparted by people to phenomena and their social context. Through uncovering how meanings are constructed, I can gain insights into the meanings imparted and thereby improve our comprehension of the whole.

➤ **The social world does not exist independently of human knowledge:** As researchers our knowledge and understanding of phenomena constantly influence us in terms of the types of questions we ask in the way we conduct our research. Our knowledge and understanding are always limited to the things to which we have been exposed, our own unique experiences and the meanings we have imparted.

➤ **Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world:** Interpretivism proposes that there are multiple and no single realities of phenomena, and that these realities can differ across time and place. Our knowledge and understanding of the social world and the realities being constructed increase and in so doing enrich our theoretical framework.

Figure 3.1 below summarises my application of the interpretivist paradigm best.

Figure 3.1: Representation of interpretivism (Maree, 2007)



Researchers who are critical about the interpretivist paradigm argue that a major weakness is that it cannot address the factors and conditions that lead to meanings and interpretations, actions, rules and beliefs and thus “fails to acknowledge the institutional structures, particularly divisions of interest and relations to power and as a result presents incomplete accounts of social behaviour by their neglect of the political and ideological contexts of much educational research” (Sarantakos, 2005).

In view of this, I as the researcher admit that the issues of power, politics and ideology have a great influence on young African women’s historical consciousness. The purpose was not to change the phenomena or the society as is the main concern of critical research but rather to come to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of historical consciousness as well as the factors responsible for its representation in a particular way. (Blanche & Kelly, 2002) disclosed that it is conceivable to describe a phenomena in “rich detail and present its findings in engaging and sometimes evocative language” and still be an interpretive researcher. This therefore validates my choice to work with the interpretivist paradigm in spite of the outlined short comings as this paradigm will best accommodate the purpose and focus of my study.

3.2.2 Qualitative approach

The qualitative approach was adopted for this study and was used in conjunction with the interpretive paradigm. There are various suggestions pointed out in this regard: “We use qualitative research as an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics. The data collected has been termed ‘soft’ that is rich in description of people, places and conversations and not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions are not framed by operationalizing variables; rather, they are formulated to investigate in all their complexity, in context” (Bogdam and Biklen, 1982 cited in(Steven, et al., 1993). The connection between the qualitative research approach and the interpretive paradigm is also emphasised by (Steven, et al., 1993) who suggest that research carried out in the interpretive paradigm is called

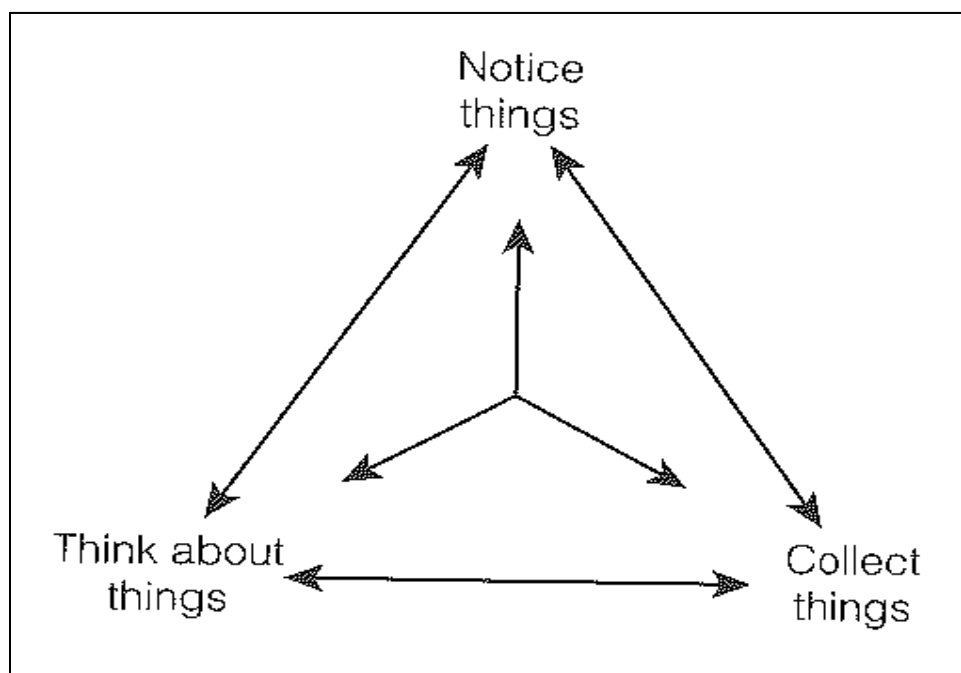
qualitative research. As a result it is argued that: “interpretivist research methods try to describe and interpret people’s feelings and experiences in human terms rather than through quantification and measurements” (Blanche & Kelly, 2002). The insinuation here is that the interpretive paradigm relates to the qualitative rather than the quantitative research approach. This paradigm assumes that people have real subjective experiences that must be taken seriously, and the best way to understand these experiences is by interacting with them and listening to what they say. (Blanche & Kelly, 2002) believe that the qualitative research techniques are the most appropriate for researching this.

Qualitative approaches, processes and procedures extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data obtained of the people and situations that they are investigating. Although the assumptions and procedures of these approaches differ, I found that most of the qualitative data analysis processes and procedures do share some common features. Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretative philosophy that is aimed at examining the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. Moreover, qualitative researchers try to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon - in the case of this study young African women and their historical consciousness. This is done by analysing perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their construction of the phenomenon. This is best achieved through a process of inductive analyses of qualitative data where the main purpose is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by a more structured theoretical orientation. Hence I followed a process of open-coding as explained below.

The qualitative approach also involves organizing and explaining the data - in short making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noticing patterns, themes, categories and regularities. The qualitative research approach is based on a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context (or real-world settings) and in general, the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the

phenomenon of interest but the researcher becomes the instrument through which data is collected and analysed (Maree, 2007). In other words, research is carried out in real life situations and not in an experimental (test – retest) situation. Consequently, unobtrusive data gathering techniques such as interviews, which I used, and observations are dominant in the naturalistic (interpretive) paradigm (Maree, 2007). Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis tends to be an on-going and interactive process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined and are not merely a number of successive steps. In the qualitative approach researchers often find it advisable and necessary to return to the original field notes and verify conclusions or to the participants consulted in the research (Maree, 2007). (J. Seidel & Lewis, 2003)developed a useful model which best explained my application of the interactive process of qualitative research approach - see Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Qualitative Research Approach (J Seidel, 1998)



The model consists of three interactive elements: noticing, collecting and reflecting (thinking about it). These elements are interlinked and cyclical (J Seidel, 1998). For example, while reflecting on the data I have collected, I noticed specific gaps in the data

that require additional data collection and I decided to use the émigré method. I gave the émigrés the transcribed data that I have collected during the interview process, so that they would read it and try to make sense of it by adding additional data which was omitted by the selected group of young African women during the interview process – see Figure 3.3 lower down. When analysing and thinking about the qualitative data, my goal was to summarise what I have seen or heard in terms of common words, phrases or patterns that would help me with the understanding and interpretation of what was emerging. I always kept in mind that qualitative data consisted of words and observations and not numbers or statistics. The main aim was not to measure, but to understand, interpret and make sense of what was in the data. To achieve my aim, I used the following steps:

- **Data collection:** I collected data through social interaction with participants (sample group of young African women) by means of semi-structured interviews and the critical reading by émigrés.
- **Data analysis:** I focused on the constant comparison of the data, leading to the coding of the data and the simultaneous conceptualisation and assessment of the similarities and differences in social interaction in search of a core idea that could explain variability in interactions ((Wells, 1995).
- **Theory delimitation:** Once the core idea has been identified, new data on interaction was sought to confirm and disconfirm the elaborated concepts and the relationship among them (Wells, 1995). This process was continued until no new insights into these relationships in terms of the core idea or dimensions are revealed.

3.2.3 Ontology and epistemological assumptions

According to Maree, (2007) the nature and form of reality (that which is or can be known) is called ontology. The nature and form of reality is defined differently by different philosophers and in various research methodologies and approaches to research. Burrell and Morgan, (1979) contend that the subjective view of the world derives from the assumption that while the social world is perceived as external to

individual cognition, it is made up of names, concepts and labels that are social and historical creations and human constructed entities. Hence, the utility of these entities is based upon their convenience as tools for describing, making sense of and negotiating the external world. The qualitative research paradigm therefore focuses on the social construction of people's ideas and concepts. In other words, the qualitative research approach focuses on people, how and why they interact with each other the way they do things and their motives and relationships (Maree, 2007). Therefore, I would say that it is about deeper meanings of social actions; how these are interpreted, understood and appreciated by individuals and groups and how they have been shaped over time and history. Likewise, the ontological assumption for the *Umhlanga* ceremony and related processes is that it is socially constructed and not only interpreted differently by different people but is practiced for a supposed particular purpose and thus the intended meaning can vary greatly from what is actually perceived by people in general (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Kincheloe and Horn (2007) propose that epistemology differs from ontology in the sense that it informs methodologies about the nature of the knowledge that is being sought. It is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of knowledge and truth. According to (Maree, 2007) epistemology relates to how things can be known – how truths or facts or physical laws if they do exist, can be discovered and disclosed. Therefore, epistemology looks at how one knows reality, the method for knowing the nature of reality, or how one comes to know reality – assumes a relationship between the knower and the known. From an epistemological perspective the question arises whether knowledge can be viewed as objectively knowable or, in contrast, only subjectively knowable. Therefore, we may say whether the findings of research can have universal application and thus be generalised to all contexts, or whether the findings can only be applied to specific cultural and historical sites – in the case of my study it is clearly subjective and not generalisable (Maree, 2007).

The approach and paradigm I decided to engage with in this research study is in line with my ontological and epistemological assumptions. Henning, (2004) and Sarantakos,

(2005) believed that there are obvious differences between the concepts. According to them, ontologies help inform methodologies as to the nature of reality or as to what social research is supposed to study and the main question here should be – what is the nature of reality? They also reason that epistemologies inform methodologies about the nature of knowledge or about what counts as a fact and where knowledge is to be sought. The main questions researchers ask here are: How do we know what we know? And in what way is reality known to us? Simply put, epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge. While generally we see that ontological and epistemological prescriptions are packed in paradigms which guide everyday research (Sarantakos, 2005) the interpretive paradigm in particular is typified by a specific ontology and epistemology (Blanche & Kelly, 2002).

3.3 Research methodology and methods

The research methodology was a case study, because I wanted to understand the historical consciousness of young African women as related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Therefore, I used sample and semi-structured questions for the focus group interviews; field notes; émigré perspective as my methods.

3.3.1 Case study

For the qualitative component of this study an instrumental case study design has been selected, as it assisted me in gaining an understanding of young African women's historical consciousness and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Furthermore, it provided me with multiple sources of data and facilitates the process of exploring and describing the phenomenon under review clearly (Fouche' & Delport, 2002). A case study is a specific situation that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle Nesbitt & Watt, (1984). It provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling researchers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles. Case studies can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis. (Robson, 2002) states that; "a case study

opt for analytic rather than statistical generalization that is they develop a theory which can help the researchers to understand other similar cases, phenomena or situations.” As such a case study can observe effects in real contexts, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects. Some case studies strive to portray ‘what is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973).

(Stuurman, 1999) stated that a distinguishing feature of case studies is that human systems have a wholeness or integrity to them rather than being a loose connection of traits, necessitating in depth investigation. Furthermore, case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance. (Murray & Beglar, 2009) in turn argue that case studies can provide intensive and in-depth in-sights of a specific individual or specific context or situation. The real strength of the case study method is its potential to illuminate a ‘case’ in great depth and detail and to place that case in a ‘real’ context. (Yin, 2006) argued that: “The case study method is best applied when research addresses descriptive or explanatory questions and aims to produce a first-hand understanding of people and events.” For example in the case of my study the descriptive question was: What processes do young African women undergo before they go to the *Umhlanga* ceremony? Two examples of explanatory question are how and why questions: How do young African women feel about the *Umhlanga* ceremony and why do they feel the way they do about the *Umhlanga* ceremony?

From the interpretive perspective the typical characteristic of case studies is that they strive towards a comprehensive (holistic) understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of a phenomenon under study (Maree, 2007). Therefore, by employing a case study this study developed a rich and comprehensive understanding about young African women and their historical consciousness with regards to the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

The case in this research study therefore referred to a specific phenomenon and a specific object of study which is the historical consciousness of young African women as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. (Maree, 2007) proposes that the case study method is used either to describe a unit of analysis or to describe a research method. In line with the above, my justification for the case study style lies in the fact that it is directly linked to the research questions of this study through the why and the how questions. This contributed to convincing me to employ a case study approach.

3.3.2. The sample

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for the study. Sampling decisions are therefore made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions. Sampling in qualitative research is flexible (Maree, 2007). The suitable sampling methods and choice of sample were considered carefully and critically in order to not only enhance the quality of this study, but also to increase the trustworthiness of the research findings. The need for careful sampling was also due to the need to set clear delimitation posts as part of the process of delineating the inquiry (Henning, 2004). Another factor that was seriously considered in sampling was the sample size. (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011) state that after the decision has been taken as to which participants will be used in the research study and after obtaining access to an accessible population of such participants, the researcher must then proceed to “determine how many participants are needed to test the hypothesis adequately.”

I chose purposive sampling for my study, because I targeted young African women who were between 16 and 19 years old and their participation was based on their willingness to partake in this study. According to Black (1999), purposive sampling involves hand-picking the participants based on exact characteristics in order to develop a sample that is large enough yet possesses the required traits. This method of sampling is used in special situations where the sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind (Maree,

2007). The methodology I employed in this research study included a small sample population of purposively selected young African women who were all school going and were between the above-mentioned ages. With regard to this study, I decided to limit my sample size to three groups (one group each from three different schools). I chose three high schools at random in the district of Ixopo, the district in which I teach, to conduct my research. I approached the principals of these three different schools and I explained to them that I was doing research on young African women who still attend school with regards to the *Umhlanga* ceremony and I intended to choose their schools as samples for my study. I served these principals with the consent letter (Appendix B).

These schools had learners from both rural and urban areas which were going to work to my advantage to obtain rich data. Rich data would enhance my understanding of the historical consciousness of young African women with regard to the *Umhlanga* ceremony, and having participants from a diverse urban/rural environment would greatly enhance this study. With this in mind there was a need for sufficient manageability of my Masters study especially with regard to the time factor. Thus limiting the sample to three groups was one way of ensuring that the study was completed within the expected time frame but also allowed for the obtaining of rich data. Furthermore and more importantly was the fact that this study was a qualitative case study, as a result, the sample size was not a concern since my interest was on acquiring an in-depth understanding of the historical consciousness of young African women with regard to the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

At the outset, once permission was obtained, I asked their ages in order for me to obtain an initial sample with suitable characteristics during the first phase of the study. Moreover, I explained to my participants before the commencement of the interviews if I could use a tape recorder during the interviews. They were also informed that they are at liberty to withdraw during the interview if they feel the need and they would not be disadvantaged in anyway. My foremost aim was to obtain rich data regarding their historical consciousness as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. I designed the

following criteria which I used before the commencement of the interview to make sure that the participants qualify:

- The participants should be between the ages 16 and 19 years old.
- The participants should be resident in the Ixopo district.
- The participants should be attending school, because my target groups are learners.
 - The participants should understand the *Umhlanga* ceremony and speak IsiZulu or IsiXhosa.
 - The participants should be Africans.

Therefore, I drew up the following table figure 3.4 below of the sample group of young African women who participated in this research. I used pseudonyms for schools and for sample groups.

Figure 3.3: The research sample

School	Date	Participants	Age	Place
<i>Sizanenhlanhla High School</i>	16 May 2013	<i>Nomcebo</i> <i>Nonkosi</i> <i>Zandile</i> <i>Nomfundo</i> <i>Mandisa</i> <i>Thoko</i>	17 18 17 18 16 18	Ixopo
School	Date	Participants	Age	Place
<i>Tholulwazi High School</i>	31 July 2013	<i>Mpume</i> <i>Thobeka</i> <i>Enhle</i> <i>Zama</i>	17 18 16 17	Ixopo

School	Date	Participants	Age	Place
<i>Khanyisa High School</i>	21 August 2013	<i>Lwazi</i> <i>Sthabile</i> <i>Ntokozo</i> <i>Mandisa</i>	18 17 16 17	Ixopo

3.3.3 Semi-structured focus group interviews

The schools principals I chose gave me an IsiZulu teacher to assist me to find young African women who were interested in participating in my study in their schools. I explained, to the young people who volunteered to partake in this research study, my research topic and that I wanted to work with a limited number of participants consisting of three to six in a group. I also furnished them with the consent letter (Appendix C).

Most researchers tend to use semi-structured interviews when they used purposive sampling in their research studies to corroborate data emerging from other data sources (Maree, 2007). Therefore, I used semi-structured focus group interviews to obtain rich data that would enable me to develop an understanding of young African women's historical consciousness as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. I listened attentively during the interviews to the responses of the participants, so that I could identify new emerging lines of inquiry that were directly related to historical consciousness. These were then explored and probed. Simultaneously it was easy to become side tracked during the focus group interviews by trivial aspects that were not related to my study (Maree, 2007). When this happened I guided my participants back to the focus of the interview. I used probing strategies to obtain an immense amount of information. For probing purposes I turned to strategies proposed by (Maree, 2007):

- **Detail-oriented probes** are aimed at ensuring that you understand the “who”, “where” and “what” of the answer given by the participant – be careful in using “why” – type questions as they are sometimes experienced as threatening.

- **Elaboration probes** are designed to obtain the full picture and normally involve asking the participant to tell you more about a certain example or answer given. Be sensitive and never try to force participants to answer questions that they do not want to answer.

- **Clarification probes** are used to check if your understanding of what has been said is accurate. Paraphrasing (giving the gist of what you think you heard) can be useful to confirm what has been said.

My use of the focus group interview strategy was based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses. I carried out the interview discussion with the purpose of collecting in-depth qualitative data about a group’s perceptions, attitudes and experiences on the *Umhlanga* ceremony. I started the interview with less structured questions to ease participants into the situation. The aim was to hear participants’ general perspectives and to ease them into the process where they will actively debate issues. Consequently, as the interaction develops I became more structured and the goal was to generate as many views and perceptions as possible from the group. I also encouraged full participation and interaction among group members and also used probing to steer the discussions or to clarify aspects, but I always remained in the background. Towards the end all participants were focused on the heart of the research question and the final section was narrow and structured. The goal was to obtain answers to my specific research questions.

As my foremost concern was to acquire rich authentic data during the interview I allowed the participants to use both English and IsiZulu. This was also done because there may be certain words that might not be easy for the participants to know in English. Furthermore, some words might not be easy to say in IsiZulu for cultural

reasons and be better to say them in English. For example, it is easy to say virgin in English whereas in IsiZulu it is not easy to say it especially if you are talking to a person with whom you are not familiar.

While I carried out the interviews successfully it was not as easy as I thought and I did face challenges that I had to resolve. When I arrived at schools and met the learners themselves it transpired that it was going to be impossible for me to carry out the interviews the way I wanted, because I had to follow the school schedule. The learners were busy with the preparations of the mid-year examination. However, I managed to do only one group from one school on 16 May 2013. When the schools open in July again it was not easy, because the schools were embarking on the intervention trying to help the learners to improve their results. This was a strict instruction from the Department of Basic Education. Therefore, the educators were expected to work extra hours and sometimes on certain Saturdays. I was also part of this programme. Therefore, my schedule for the research was interrupted and I had to re-schedule it based on when the learners would be available. I managed to do the second group on 31 July 2013. I interviewed the last school on the 21 August 2013.

Another challenge was that as a man, I did the research. This had an advantage as it would not have been easy for African women to do it because the young African women were in all probability going to assume that the researcher knew all the detail about the *Umhlanga* ceremony already. A similar thing happens to me during the interview when one of my interviewees spoke about the Nguni people. I asked who the Nguni people were and instead of answering my question she further asked me a question; "Are you not a black person? You should know." My reaction was to abide by all the University ethical guidelines, observing and listening carefully to determine the levels of discomfort of the participants and by constant post-data gathering reflection on what has transpired during the research process.

3.3.4 Émigré perspectives

For me to gain rich data, besides that obtained during the semi-structured focus group interviews, I introduced an element of authenticity to the study by the use of the émigré perspective (Schutz, 1994). An émigré is someone who was not part of the interview and looks on from a distance. My foremost aim of introducing the émigré to my study was to look back at the historical consciousness of the young African women and the *Umhlanga* ceremony which they also experienced in some way or another and comment on that. The émigré can fulfil this role because she, or they as young African women, have recently completed their schooling. I was put in touch with the émigrés with the assistance of *oNomezho* (women who conduct virginity testing). The first step in this regard was for me to speak to the young African women whom I interviewed to arrange a meeting between the *oNomezho* and I. When I met the *oNomezho* I introduced myself and also explained my research topic. I showed them my clearance letters and they trusted me since I was brought to them by the young African women whom I had interviewed. I asked them to identify six young African women who have completed school and who understood the *Umhlanga* ceremony and the related rituals. They identified six young African women (émigrés) who had completed school. Even though they (émigrés) did not know me they trusted me since I was introduced to them by the *oNomezho*. I introduced myself to the young African women (émigrés) and also explain my research topic. I furnished them with a consent letter (Appendix D).

I also explained to them that their duties were to verify the focus group interview data I obtained. The émigrés was made up of three pairs of young African women. These pairs did not know each other and were also working on this research study separately at different times.

I gave them the interviews from the focus groups, which I had transcribed verbatim, and I asked them to read them and comment in writing on what was said by the sample group. I had created a column on the right hand side of the transcribed interview sheet and I asked them to write their comment in the comments' column opposite to what was

said by the sample group. I asked them to work in pairs, therefore each pair analysed one transcription of the sample group. They were, as a pair, to discuss the transcriptions and add their comments and reflections in a narrative manner to the interview transcript. By doing so they enhanced and enriched the data obtained from the interviews as the émigré perspective served to counter any ‘holding back’ that might have occurred in the interview process conducted by me. Ultimately this served as a means of cross-checking and verification of the data gathered during the focus group interviews. See table 3.4 for a snapshot of the process.

Figure 3.4: Example - Émigré reviewing focus group transcript

<u>TRANSCRIPT OF GROUP 2</u>	<u>ÉMIGRÉ COMMENTS</u>
<p>Q. What do you know about <i>Umhlanga</i> ceremony?</p> <p>A. Mpume: It is a culture of African people that is practiced on young girls in order to encourage them to preserve their virginity.</p>	<p>It also teaches the young girls on how an African woman is expected to behave towards the community and this culture also teach them to have self-respect and control. This encourages them to lead by example to the young girls who are still growing up, so that they will know who they are and where they come from.</p>

I eventually compared the comments made by the émigrés with the focus group interview data with the aim of discerning the similarities and dissimilarities, so that it would be easy for me to draw conclusions based on the historical consciousness of the sample group and of the émigré pairs.

3.3.5 Field notes

The researcher, during the research process, can utilise field notes. These contain descriptions of the researchers’ reflections regarding the observations, interviews and the stimulation of new ideas during the study (Mayan, 2001). I used field notes in two

ways. In my research journal I wrote notes during the focus group interviews to verify that what I have heard from the interviewee was actually what the person meant. I wrote down cryptically what was said by my interviewees as well as whatever gestures I observed during the interview process. This I used to ask probing questions during the focus group interview and also during subsequent interviews. At various times, as ideas related to my research surfaced, I also jotted them down in my research journal. These could be ideas about questions, literature to follow-up on and things that I needed to ask my supervisor about or wanted to raise during the History Education cohort sessions.

The field notes helped me in numerous ways. For example, when I transcribed the interviews of the sample groups or when I did the analysis of the data.

3.3.6 The analysis of my data

Once I had obtained the data from the focus group interviews, the émigrés as well as from my field notes the analysis could start. I decided to analyse the data based on the theoretical framework of my study which is historical consciousness. To do this I followed Angvik's (1997) theoretical framework which is based on the relationship between the past, present and future. See Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2. In my analysis as described below the notions of past, present and future were constantly central to what I did.

The first step was to recast all the data into a single blended document. Then I used open-coding to analyse my three data sets. This I did by reading and re-reading the data document until a saturation level was reached. This meant that no new categories or themes occurred (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). The categories that emerged were then grouped as they related to the past, present and future. The next step was to compare and contrast the various categories to ensure that they fitted into the three broad notions of historical consciousness namely: past, present and future. The categories that emerged were then used to write-up my dissertation. In terms of the writing-up I decided to follow a narrative approach as this was to me the best way to unpack the

historical consciousness of young African women as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. This I did (see Chapter 4) by using Angvik's (1997) theoretical framework to present the various accounts in a single narrative.

3.4 Issues of trustworthiness

Researchers operating in the qualitative paradigm do display rigour in their studies, but because they have different perspectives of reality and truth, they prefer to consider validity and reliability from a viewpoint congruent with their assumptions and use terms that are relevant to their practice of research such as trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009). The term "trustworthiness" refers to the way in which the researcher is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of a high quality (Lincoln & Guba in Johnson & Turner, 2003). Thus, qualitative researchers view their enquiry in terms of being trustworthy and this is essential as it deals with the match between research findings and what is actually contained in the data (Merriam, 2009).

I therefore had to demonstrate in my interpretation of young African women's historical consciousness as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony by supporting it with the research findings. I therefore introduced émigrés to my study to ensure credibility of the findings. This strategy involves confirming one's findings with participants observed or interviewed and or the documents studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Merriam, 2009). Attempts were also made to search for negative cases when I analysed the data inductively by means of open coding. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.410) describe a negative case as a "situation, a social scene or a participant's view that contradicts the emerging pattern of meaning." As I inductively analysed the data that was generated from the verbal data I actively sought negative cases which did not "fit within the pattern" (Patton, 2002, p. 554). This helped me to draw conclusions on the collected data. For example, I discovered that some of the young African women were not familiar or sometimes do not like to hear anything about the *Umhlanga* ceremony, because of its

precedence which is virginity testing. They claimed that it exposes them to rape and bridal abduction.

The trustworthiness of my study was also enhanced by my presentations at the History Education cohort seminars as well as the papers I presented on my study at the South African Society for History Teaching conferences in Pietermaritzburg in 2013 and in Johannesburg in 2014. The comments and feedback received on these occasions were used to build the trustworthiness of my study.

3.5 Ethical issues

Bearing in mind that this study involved human issues of ethics was a serious concern. The Helsinki Declaration of 1972 confirmed that it is imperative to obtain clearance from an ethics committee when human subjects are involved in any kind of research of an empirical nature. The implication is that whenever researchers are conducting research ethical clearance will have to be sought. An application for ethical clearance was done and full approval was given by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, with reference number: HSS / 0110 / 013M (Appendix A). Consequently, this research adhered to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's ethics policy. Therefore, people involved in this study, and the data collected, were treated in accordance with the regulations of the University. In accordance with the University policy other authorities and the participants also had to complete the necessary ethical clearance documentation after their rights in the research process were explained to them.

Within the interpretivist paradigm the role of the researcher entails being an active research participant as for example an interviewer (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). Due to the fact that I, as the researcher, was involved in the interviews and other data collection methods, it was necessary to continually recognise my bias, values and personal interests with regard to the research topic and research process (Creswell, 2003).

3.6 Conclusion

I started this chapter by clarifying the concepts of research design and methodology before discussing the specific design and methodological choices adopted in this study. With the research methodology I discussed the research methods employed in my study such as interpretive paradigm. This paradigm aims to understand and describe meaningful social actions for my study which is the historical consciousness of young African women in relation to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. I decided to use this paradigm, because it accepts individual's uniqueness in terms of experiences which needs to be respected or considered every time when one engages in conversation with an individual by carefully listening to what the person says. I also used a qualitative approach, because it best links with the interpretive paradigm as highlighted by ((Steven, et al., 1993) who suggest that research carried out in the interpretive paradigm is called qualitative research. My study was also a case study because it was going to assist me in gaining an understanding of young African women, historical consciousness and the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

Human systems have a wholeness or integrity to them rather than being a loose connection of traits, necessitating in depth investigation. I used semi-structured focus group interviews. The interview itself had less structured questions to ease participants into the situation, because I wanted to hear participants' general perspectives and to ease them into the process where they will actively debate issues. I also used a tape recorder during the interview process as well as field notes. The tape recorder helped when I was transcribing the interview, whereas field notes helped me to probe my interviewees in order to acquire rich data. I also added the émigré perspective to my study. This assisted me by reviewing the trustworthiness of the data given by the focus groups during the interview. The aim was to eliminate any bias and obtain rich and trustworthy data. Since my study is qualitative I had to pay attention to trustworthiness of the data I received from the interviewees as well as from the émigrés, because trustworthiness deals with the credibility of findings and the reality in the data or what is

actually contained in the data (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, I had to demonstrate the interpretation of the historical consciousness of young African women in relation to the *Umhlanga* ceremony that it is supported by data collected during the review process. This study adhered to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's policy and the data collected was treated in accordance with the regulations of the University. In the next chapter the data obtained and analysed will be presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a presentation and analysis of the historical consciousness of young African women (aged between 16 and 19 years old) as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. This will be done by presenting the findings of the analysis in three themes, namely: Young African women and the Umhlanga Ceremony as it relates to: 1. the past; 2. the present and 3. the future. By presenting the analysis in this way I will be linking it directly to the theoretical framework for my study as explained in the previous chapter.

To create the narrative for this chapter the interviews from the focus groups and the émigré comments were blended together in a narrative. This was done by comparing and contrasting the findings from the analysis of the data from the three focus groups as well as three pairs of émigrés with the view of establishing similarities, differences and patterns. This was done so as to understand the historical consciousness the young African women have and why they have it. In this sense the following quotation is very appropriate: “The past is my connection to the present and the future. Why I am like I am? To find out why I am like I am ...” (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998, p.75). Above all, the aim of this chapter is to answer one of the two research questions that informed this study on historical consciousness and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The research question is: What is the historical consciousness (relationship between the past, present and future) of young African women as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony?

4.2 Young African women’s consciousness of the past as it relates to the *Umhlanga* Ceremony

In the past, regarding the historical consciousness of the young women who participated in this study, the *Umhlanga* ceremony was not known to the Zulu people. However, individual mothers in a family context administered virginity testing to their daughters in the privacy of their homes. The main aim was to prevent unnecessary pregnancies and maintain their daughters as virgins, so that their fathers, and by implication the whole family, could receive cattle as part of the *lobola* paid by grooms when these young African women were married. The mothers took the virginity testing upon themselves because they regarded themselves as the custodians of culture and morality. In the process the mothers inspected the vaginas of their young daughters for the presence of the hymen. To them the presence of the hymen was evidence that their daughters were still virgins. In time this practice spread from within families to neighbours and eventually to the whole village. When it was exercised by the whole village the practice of virginity testing was soon copied by other villages. With more and more villages practicing virginity testing in the deep past the practice changed and in an evolutionary step certain old African women, the so-called *oNomezho*, were appointed by the mothers to conduct the virginity testing on their daughters at a central venue, accessible to several neighbouring villages. The *oNomezho* who conducted the virginity testing were married women, 45 years old or older and they must have reached menopause. They should also have been experienced and respected women in the community since the virginity testing took place at their homes.

The *oNomezho* looked and felt inside the vagina of the young African women for the hymen. As part of the process the *oNomezho* inserted her finger in the vagina of the young African woman to test if she could feel the hymen. The *oNomezho* could, reputedly, also see physical signs on the young African woman that revealed her virginal status, such as dimples behind the knees, the sagging of breasts as well as dark veins on the legs of young African women. After each test she would wash her hands with clean water without soap. The virginity testing was conducted in the early hours of the day (04:00 to 05:30) and was done at this time so that no one would know who was partaking. Consequently the young African women who were going for virginity testing were not chanting any songs as they did not want anyone to see or hear them.

The idea was that they should remain anonymous in the community as the testing was not a public affair.

In time, in a further evolutionary step in the process, as explained by the participants, took the responsibility further away from their mothers. The tested young African women were to be mentored by the so-called *Amaqhikiza*. They were women, aged 25 to 40, who were still virgins and unmarried. Their duty was to make sure that the young African women remained virgins and in performing this duty they had to help the young women with their personal problems and especially with young men who were keen on courting the young women. Their duty was to capacitate the young African women with knowledge about how they should behave in front of men, and especially what to say, or not say to them.

When the young virgin woman directed the young man who wanted to court her to the *amaqhikiza* it meant that she was in love with him but was not allowed to express it publically. She would instead give the *amaqhikiza* a beaded necklace, or beaded bracelet, and mention the name of the young man who would need to come and engage with the *amaqhikiza*. In so doing the *amaqhikiza* would know that the young woman loved the man. The *amaqhikiza* would then give the young man in question the beaded necklace or beaded bracelet. In the process they would screen him so as to ascertain that he really loved the young woman. However, according to the research participants there was no specific procedure that was followed in screening a young man. However, as part of the process the *amaqhikiza* would play tricks with the young man by means of delaying tactics. For instance, they would refuse to meet him in order to see if he did have patience and persistence as characteristics. If he did come back they would, for example, say that they did not know the young woman he was talking about and they would stop their conversation with him. If the young man in question kept on returning it would be a sign to them that he really loved the young woman. They would then say to him: give us the handkerchief which has five corners. By that they meant give me a hand shake. After they had shaken hands the *amaqhikiza* would hand over the beaded necklace or beaded bracelet made by that young woman.

In the past, according to the research participants, the *amaqhikiza* used to meet the young African woman first before she met the man in question. They then told her that they, the young woman and man, should not have sex, but that they should rather have *ukusoma* (thigh sex). In performing thigh sex the young African woman was told to always be conscious that she might fall pregnant in the process. This could happen because of *umjubelo* (jumping of the sperm) which the young African woman should be always aware of when they were performing thigh sex. Since the young women only wore the *isigege* (beaded panel), she had to put that between her thighs in such a manner that the young man's penis would go below the panel. In doing she prevented the sperm "jumping" into her vagina.

The *amaqhikiza* also advised the young women that they should always sleep on their right sides and the young man must sleep on his left. The young African women should also cross their legs for the whole night no matter if her legs became sore, because if she tried to relax the man could get an opportunity to force himself on her. The reason was that the young women was seen as being more powerful if she slept on her right side and that the man is powerless if he slept on his left side. It would therefore not be easy for the man to force himself on the young women with the aim of penetrating her.

The mothers had their daughters tested and guided in the manner as outlined above and did so without having to ask permission from anybody. However, what did happen was, as constructed from the focus group interviews and the responses of the émigrés, was the mothers systematically abdicated their role in the testing and after-test mentoring to the *oNomehlo* and the *amaqhikiza* respectively. Soon virginity testing was a social practice of the Zulu people in all the villages in the area. This culture was passed on from generation to generation through word of mouth from parents, *oNomehlo*, *amaqhikiza*, peers and members of the community. Consequently, the young African women spend their time with their families absorbing a set of historical ideas about rituals and social practices and their roles in it. In all of this the African mothers became the custodians of culture.

According to the research participants the practice was, in time, reported by the chief councillors (*izinduna*) to the king. The king, on the advice of his chief councillors, took over the practice of virginity testing from the mothers as overseers. The latter thus ceded authority to the king. The king endorsed the practice of virginity testing by introducing the *Umhlanga* ceremony whereby young African women who have been tested will get an opportunity to meet the king as part of a group. For the young women this was an incentive as one of them could possibly be chosen during the ceremony to become one of his wives and thus one of the queens. Since the king is different from ordinary people he is not treated the same and therefore did not have to meet the *amaqhikiza*. Instead he could send emissaries to the parents of that young woman he has chosen to negotiate with them directly about lobola.

Thus when the king took control the practice of virginity testing changed when compared to its origin and it now became much more male-orientated with male regiments loyal to the king always being part of the process. According to the participants in the study other changes were also then implemented because the king's intention was to unite young African women and encourage them to stay virgins up until they married. This was also the reason why the *Umhlanga* Ceremony was introduced by the king. In the past virginity testing thus became the epistemology of the *Umhlanga* ceremony and the young African women were the role players and the *oNomezho* become the referees and the *amaqhikiza* the life coaches. The mothers had in the process become inactive guardians in all of this.

According to the research participants all the young African women who had undergone virginity testing in their villages were allowed to partake in the *Umhlanga* ceremony and for them to qualify they needed to have undergone their first menstruation. This was not the case when mothers had started virginity testing. Much emphasis continued to be placed in the past on being virgin and young African women who managed to remain so were regarded as being loyal and faithful to the king. They were also informed that they would lose many things if they did not remain a virgin such as not being able to take

part in the *Umhlanga* ceremony, not being able to meet the king of the Zulus, they could get diseases, fall pregnant early and so forth. This is caused by the fact that they never received advice from *oNomezho*.

Under the king's authority, regarding the consciousness of the past exhibited by the research participants, he created an opportunity to demonstrate his gratitude with a sacrifice to the royal ancestors on behalf of all young women and their communities throughout his kingdom. This he did by slaughtering cattle as a sacrifice for the young African women who partook in the *Umhlanga* ceremony. According to the young women this happened in the past because the king was the keeper and sharer of the "nation's historical achievements". The *Umhlanga* ceremony therefore now started to serve as a rite of passage for young African women to adulthood and womanhood and also promoted the spirit of African nationalism as other Nguni people would also be present. In participating in all of this the young African women had little say as everyone believed that the "*Umhlanga* ceremony is the right way of upbringing young African women." Some young African women felt cold, empty and forsaken by their own mothers and did not like to partake in virginity testing as well as the *Umhlanga* ceremony; however they had no choice due to high expectations of their parents and also being loyal to the king.

It is clear from the narrative constructed from the research evidence that the consciousness of the young women about the past as it related to the *Umhlanga* Ceremony demonstrates two clear stories. One is a homely family where matters related to virginity testing were a private affair conducted between mothers and daughters which foregrounded the honour of the family and the morality of the daughter involved. In time, as evinced from the consciousness of the research participants of the past, specialised roles evolved which were filled by the *oNomezho* and the *amaqhikiza* respectively. This served to precipitate a process whereby mothers and families were side-lined in the testing process. However, the testing was still driven locally by the community. At some stage, in the past, at a time completely unknown to the participants, virginity testing became the domain of the king and the men that supported him. This is the start of the second story which ushered in a new era. Although the

oNomezlo and the *amaqhikiza* had still retained their roles the virginity testing now centred on the honour of the king and the people via the *Umhlanga* Ceremony and not the young women or necessarily their families. In the process many of the rules changed, such as for example as it related to who could be tested, the role of the mothers of the young African women and the fact that the virginity testing was now a public affair.

What is also clear is that the past for the young women who had participated in this study was a vague and undistinguishable era and they therefore used the now present to construct it. They had a sense that the ceremony happened in the past. They were taught this unofficial history in various informal ways by their peers, parents, community members in their village, from *oNomezlo* and as well as *amaqhikiza*. However, they were never formally instructed about the past of virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* Ceremony. Therefore, for example, they were not taught that the founder and the builder of the Zulu nation, Shaka stopped the practice for reasons unknown. Also they are not aware that approximately 150 years later the current king of the Zulus reinstated this ceremony. This comment is not made to insinuate that the young women are wrong or do not know history but rather to foreground the fact that their consciousness or state of mind about the past as it relates to virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* Ceremony is not based on the deep past but rather a recent past from which they had to braid together a plausible version of what went before so that they can try and understand what they were experiencing in the present in this regard.

Their consciousness is therefore based on a very messy and contradictory unofficial history which they have imagined to be a developmental one which evolved from the village to the royal homestead. As such their consciousness of the past of the virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* Ceremony is to a certain extent also a continuation of the story of the past of the Zulu people – who evolved from scattered villages into a united kingdom held together by male dominated ceremonies. Their sense of the past in this case is therefore not what really happened but the consciousness of a vague collective state of mind in which the present is projected into the past.

In the next section I will be moving to the consciousness of the young African women as it related to virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* Ceremony as experienced in the present – meaning their lived experiences.

4.3 Young African women’s historical consciousness of the present as it relates to the *Umhlanga* Ceremony

How then did the young African women, who participated in this study, experience virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* Ceremony as part of their lived experiences in the present (the here and now)? It clearly emerged that they had different experiences which served to shape different and conflicting consciousnesses.

The young African women’s’ experiences as they relate to the *Umhlanga* ceremony and virginity testing have, in their view, changed radically from what they were in the past. Much of this they attributed to the fact that the daily routines and challenges that people are experiencing happens in a world dominated by technology and commerce. This has changed the practice of virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The different ways in which the young African women are learning about the *Umhlanga* ceremony and virginity testing are more diverse than before and the research participants pointed to the fact that in the present there is no uniform way for young African women to learn about virginity testing. Some have virginity testing administered from a very young age by their mothers and young women learn about virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony for the first time at home. In other cases the parents are working far from home and it is therefore difficult for them to reside with their families. They therefore leave their children with relatives and these relatives oversee that the virginity testing is conducted. This is done not only so the relatives remain on good terms with their parents but also to ensure that the young women remain virgins. At some stage the testing at home – be it by parents or family members – stopped and all the young African women are then sent to the *oNomezho* in their village. The virginity testing then moves into the public domain and it is done at the homestead of the *induna*. This test,

although it might differ from village to village, is generally conducted twice a month. The *oNomehlo* when they are conducting the virginity testing hold the lips of the vagina open to see if the hymen is visible “and that nothing has ever gone in.” Generally, the participants explained, the *oNomehlo* sits on the grass mat open her legs and the testee sits in front of her between the open legs of the *oNomehlo* and put her legs to the side of the *oNomehlo*’s hips and lies on her back. The *oNomehlo* then holds the lips of the vagina carefully and opens them to see if the “white eye” (hymen) is there. If the “white eye” is present the *oNomehlo* puts a white clay dot on the forehead of the testee. This symbolises that the young African woman is still a virgin. If the young African woman fails the test the *oNomehlo* puts a red clay dot on the forehead of the testee which symbolises that she is no longer a virgin. The research participants explained that young African women are tested even if they are menstruating. The young African woman who is menstruating informs the *oNomehlo* beforehand and she is told that she would be tested last. Apparently the *oNomehlo* often say it is easy to see the white eye if the young African woman is menstruating. Ultimately the white and red clay are used to publically show the status of the testee and the principle of foreseeability is not taken into account. Some people doubted the hygienic nature of the testing and as a result the *oNomehlo* now wear gloves which they either buy or collect from the local clinics. The gloves are also changed after each test with the intention of preventing the spread of infectious diseases. They also wash their hands with water and soap after each test.

Along with the change, when compared to the past as understood by the research participants, in the manner in which the testing is done the research participants explained that young African women found to still be virgins received certificates and bracelets from the *oNomehlo*. Other much more formal contemporary structures have also been introduced according to the participants. A very formal written register is also now kept and the *oNomehlo* writes down the names of all those young African women who are still virgins. This register is normally used during the round circuit process. That is when the *oNomehlo* from different villages swop around and go and test young African women who have been tested by other *oNomehlo*. The purpose behind this is to prevent bribery and corruption in the virginity testing process. The participants explained

that the round circuit is important because some parents used to bribe certain *oNomehlo* so that their daughters would be known as virgins whereas they were not. Despite the immense detail in which the research participants explained the process of virginity testing they also made it clear that this is not embraced by all parents and that some parents did not encourage their daughters to partake in the virginity testing processes as a precursor to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The young African women who do not take part in virginity testing are not allowed to go to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. However, according to the research participants the young African women who partake in the virginity testing practices do so to show respect to their parents, escape getting diseases, to show loyalty to the king and to obtain a good husband who will bring cattle for her father.

The research participants revealed that being successfully tested as still being a virgin also brought trouble to their lives as they “become soft target for the boys.” What could happen is that they could either be raped or young men could pretend as if they love the young women only for her to find herself being the victim of bridal abduction. In the past the research participants explained the *amaqhikiza* used to advise the young African women on how they should talk to men who proposed love to them. However, while the role of the *amaqhikiza* still exists in many cases as it did in the past this is not always working neatly in this manner anymore and young men and women meet without the mentoring of them. However, despite these changes the young African women are encouraged to stay virgins by both the *oNomehlo* and the *Amaqhikiza*; so that when they turn 16 years old they would go along to *Nongoma* where the *Umhlanga* ceremony takes place in the presence of the Zulu king.

All the young African women who have been tested and found to still be virgins by the round circuit are allowed to take part in the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Towards the time of the *Umhlanga* ceremony the round circuit is also conducted at the *induna*'s homestead. During this session the young African women who have constantly been tested by the *oNomehlo* of the village are tested to verify whether they do really qualify to go to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. *ONomehlo* from the round circuit will then endorse the final list of

young African women from the area they work in in order to specify who could go to the *Umhlanga* ceremony at Nongoma. The *izinduna* of the local area then slaughter goats, sheep or cattle for the young African women on the list who will be participating in the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

According to the research participants, the politicians attached to the local municipalities and business people support the *Umhlanga* ceremony. They do so by hiring buses and providing refreshments for the young African women who would go to *eNyokeni* for the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The municipal councillors work hand in hand with the *oNomezho* and *Amaqhikiza* towards the time of *Umhlanga* ceremony to determine the number of young African women who would be going so that they would have an idea of how many buses and how much food would be needed. Some Mayors, councillors and business people also accompany the young African women when they go to the *Umhlanga* ceremony which is how they show their loyalty to the king. This involvement, according to the research participants, gives all kinds of people an opportunity to influence the *Umhlanga* ceremony in a variety of ways. This also causes conflict in the present context and the young African women pointed out that the sponsorship that the *Umhlanga* ceremony receives from different people has become a cornerstone of the tension that has arisen among certain people about the authenticity of the practice of this *Umhlanga* ceremony as a cultural practice. The young women argued that as a result the ceremony benefits people who have power and a voice such as business people and politicians. However, the young African women who were tested as a prerequisite to partake in the ceremony remain voiceless people and are overlooked. The research participants argued that they do not receive any money whatsoever after the ceremony whilst the business people become rich at their expense.

An indication of how contentious an aspect the commercialisation of the *Umhlanga* ceremony is in the consciousness of the young African women is the depth to which they could explain how this all evolved. In their view the business people make much money by providing private accommodation as well as sales during the ceremony. Other business people provide equipment such as tents; Jojo water tanks; cubicles for

the young African women to bath in and mobile toilets are hired for the ceremony. Tourists from overseas countries are also attracted to the ceremony and they also bring in money for the local business people.

It was also claimed that the *oNomezlo* were also making money for themselves out of the young African women who partook in the virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. One interviewee, Mpume, explained: “Nothing is paid by the girls, but everything is taken care of by the municipality as *Thobeka* has said. “However, the girls are asked by *oNomezlo* to pay R5 or R10 whenever they are coming for virginity testing. This payment differs from village to village.” The young African women also argued in the focus groups that there were proven rumours that some of *oNomezlo* were receiving bribes from certain young African women in order for them to participate in the *Umhlanga* ceremony even though they did not qualify. As evidence for this the participants referred to an article in the *Isolezwe Ngesonto*, of 9 September 2012. According to the article (my translation) “... most people were surprised to see a gay person partaking to *Umhlanga* ceremony. He had a bracelet on his right hand which is worn by young African women who were tested and found still virgins; the problem was that how this gay man was tested? Or how did he get the bracelet?” Hence the vexing question from amongst the research participants, which echoed the sentiments from the newspaper, is that the *uNomezlo* who tested the young gay man needs to explain how she conducted the virginity testing on him and how did he receive a bracelet? Or the gay man himself needs to explain how he got himself to be like the young African women who are still virgins? Suspicion was also cast on the role of the *Amaqhikiza* as mentors in all of this by the research participants. This made some of them doubt the *Amaqhikiza* and if some of them are also receiving money to remain quiet. That the press played an important role in shaping the consciousness of the research participants on the *Umhlanga* ceremony is borne out by the fact that the call made by Angie Motshekga, the president of the ANC Women’s League, for a ban on virginity testing and the fact that she compared it with the practice of *ukuthwala* (bridal abduction) and *ukungena* (forcing a widow to marry her late husband’s brother) was surfaced during the focus group interviews and endorsed by the émigré perspectives.

The angry reaction, as reported in the *Mercury*, of Nomagugu Ngobese, president of the *Nomkhubulwane Cultural Institute*, which leads the virginity testing in KwaZulu-Natal was also challenged by the participants. Ngobese accused the women's league of being disrespectful to the Zulu king and to his people: "Who is she to dictate to us how to raise our children? Virginity testing is my culture and I will defend it. If they don't want us to practice our culture they must give us land [out of South Africa] where we can freely practice our culture without their interference." The young women were also aware of the statement by the *Nomkhubulwane Cultural Institute* that in their view virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony was meant to encourage young African women to abstain from sex; ensure the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases; unnecessary pregnancies and as a campaign to combat a new culture among young African women namely a dependence on child grants.

The research participants, who themselves were at the time of the research in the midst of the virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony were also acutely aware and had strong opinions about the participation of other races in the *Umhlanga* ceremony. To them this would dilute the value of the ceremony. Furthermore, they accused King Zwelithini of giving preferential treatment to young Indian and White women while paying scant attention to people who had been the backbone of the event since it was revived 29 years ago. Their concern emerged after the Zulu king announced at Nyokeni during 2013 that the *Umhlanga* ceremony would for this first time be opened to all races in future. The criticism of the king brought a range of other reasons to the fore of why the *Umhlanga* ceremony was to remain exclusive being that African people used it as a way to communicate with their ancestors. Other races, who did not have to undergo the same virginity testing practices, would be participating in the ceremony for fun without understanding the meaning behind it. A fear could be abstracted from the responses from the research participants that by allowing Whites and Indians to participate in the ceremony it would lose its cultural identity. This was especially so since it was claimed that the Zulu royal family had said that it would not force young women from other race groups to experience virginity testing and wear traditional attire as that was not part of their culture.

Issues around education and the *Umhlanga* ceremony were clearly also in the forefront of the consciousness of the research participants. They found themselves in an ambiguous position since the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department did not honour the *Umhlanga* ceremony as it is not reflected in the education calendar. Consequently, the young African women who partook in the *Umhlanga* ceremony were confronted with having to make difficult decisions. The reason is that the day of the *Umhlanga* ceremony coincided with the trial examination period and at that time they were writing the Matric Life Orientation paper. This made it difficult for young African women, like the research participants, who resided far from Nongoma to attend the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Although the ceremony did not interrupt the education of learners that are not in Matric the conflict between official and unofficial history learning and formal and non-formal education prompted a range of responses in the focus group interviews. The bone of contention here, as pointed out during the research process, is that the government ostensibly insists that learners must do Mathematics and Physical Science, because these subjects will help the country to produce its own technicians and medical specialists. However, to them it is not clear how the *Umhlanga* ceremony will benefit the country. Furthermore, they explained that subjects such as Life Sciences and Life Orientation which help them to learn about human reproduction as well as sexually transmitted diseases are in conflict with the non-formal education they received related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony of virginity testing. Consequently, they often look down upon the practice of the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Others feel that in a democratic South Africa people should be treated with dignity and respect, since it is spelled out clearly in the constitution of the country.

It is clear that the research participants were afflicted by ambiguity in terms of their historical consciousness about the *Umhlanga* ceremony in the present and that in many ways very little has remained the same in the present as far as virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony goes when compared to the conceptualisation the research participants held about the phenomenon and the past. The testing and the ceremony are no longer private but very public and also very commercial with a number of groups

benefitting from it other than the young women who participate. Their reward is not economic and political but rather physical and cultural but they do not see it that way. A general consciousness that emanated was one of being used for a range of purposes which they found conflicting. The result of all of this is an undercurrent of resentment and while retaining what they are told is good about it all, which in itself has also taken on new meaning with child grants entering the debate, they are confronted with a ceremony unlike the one they imagined happened in the past. In terms of the Umhlanga ceremony and the related virginity testing for the research participants what has remained constant is the fact that these events still exist but everything else related to it has changed (which is a constant in itself) and this has led to multiple and conflicting historical consciousnesses amongst the research participants as they relate to the present – the here and now which they have experienced directly.

4.4 Young African women's consciousness of the future as it relates to the *Umhlanga* Ceremony

The research process, as far as the historical consciousness of the young women who partook in the study is concerned, revealed divergent views on the future of the Umhlanga ceremony and the related virginity testing practices. The future being times yet to come. Some tend to show a reluctant attitude or behaviour towards the future of the *Umhlanga* ceremony while others are more convinced that it will continue but not necessarily in the same manner. Simply put – the future of the ceremony is unpredictable based on contemporary circumstances and experiences, because the young African women who took part in this study displayed different attitudes towards the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

A clear theme that emerged from the research process was that some of the research participants believed that the *Umhlanga* ceremony will cease to exist in future and several reasons for this came to the fore. One is the tension between the learning of unofficial history, as is the case with the *Umhlanga* ceremony, which takes place in an unstructured manner and is learnt from a range of people including family members,

parents, peers, the community, the *oNomezho* and *amaqhikiza* and many others and official schooling and all its structures and power on the other. In terms of official schooling official curricula deliver a powerful message that needs to be learnt as the young African women are examined on it and all of this takes place in the structure of an academic year. This will also determine their futures in many ways. In contrast is the position of the young African women who attend school but also go to the *Umhlanga* ceremony for this event is not given a special holiday in the education calendar and it invariably takes place during the Grade 12 September trial examination. Hence, many young African women found it not important for them to partake in a ceremony which is not recognised in the curriculum. This scepticism of the structure of educational delivery, as well as the challenges that the knowledge contained in the official school curriculum encompass as explained above, convinced some of the participants that the *Umhlanga* ceremony will not continue into the future and the future they envisage for South Africa.

The research process also revealed that the ever changing world in which the young women found themselves was reason enough to feel certain that the *Umhlanga* ceremony has no future in their consciousness. Three clear reasons emerged in this regard: the ever changing technological world contributed to challenging the idea of virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony; the impact of Westernization and the consequent adoption of new lifestyles including Christianity as a religion created an ambivalence towards the practice, and the fact that some were forced by their parents to partake in the virginity testing process and the *Umhlanga* ceremony which in turn created a negative historical consciousness.

The latter aspect especially prompted some young women to want to shun the *Umhlanga* ceremony in the future as they saw it as a violation of their human rights. Participants who took this position turned to the South African Constitution for their defence and argued that everyone has a right to be treated with human dignity. To them the Constitution was the supreme law upon which all legislation draws and to which all practices, including the *Umhlanga* ceremony, must adhere. Young women who adopted

this position explained that the Constitution shaped their world view and their view of the future which is a democratic one and which came about after bitter and protracted resistance to a divisive, degrading and almost inhumane apartheid system that treated the majority of blacks in the country as second-class citizens. The new democratic Constitution sought to address the previous imbalances of the apartheid system. Some of the more articulate young women pointed to the fact that the Constitution protected human rights in general and children's rights in particular. They also foregrounded Section 12 (1) of the Constitution, without legally quoting it, by explaining that everyone has the right to freedom and security of person, which includes the right not to be tortured in any way and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. The young women who thought in this manner argued that young African women should not have to display their vaginas during a virginity testing process to other people. To them the process of virginity testing and the associated *Umhlanga* ceremony was degrading and humiliating. At present they are under pressure from all sides, including their parents and the community, and hence they partook for they wanted to please all concerned parties, apart from themselves, so that they could go the *Umhlanga* ceremony and meet the Zulu king. This they do to the extent of even using artificial hymens.

However, although they are active participants coerced into the process the young women in this school of thought are adamant concerning their future daughters that they will not allow them to participate in virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Subsequently, their historical consciousness, based on their own experiences of the process, is a negative one. Consequently they felt that the *Umhlanga* ceremony will fall away in the future. Thinking of this nature is best described by Thoko, one of the research participants, who said "... that people tend to use the Constitution as an excuse to abandon virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony." Simultaneously the participants were also aware of criticism levelled in the press by leading political figures and academics at the *Umhlanga* Ceremony as being discriminatory and out-dated.

Equally political in nature, but emerging from an Africanist perspective, are the arguments that the *Umhlanga* ceremony and related virginity testing would not survive because of its changing nature. Participants who argued along these lines did so based on an article that appeared in *The Mercury* of 6 September, 2013, at the time when I was conducting my fieldwork for this study. The article reported that Indian and White young women were also to participate in the 2013 *Umhlanga* ceremony. This was based on an announcement by the Zulu king at Nyokeni during 2013 that the *Umhlanga* ceremony will be opened in future to all races. Some of the participants in this study were adamant that the participation of other races in the *Umhlanga* ceremony would dilute its value. Furthermore, they were not happy with the decision of King Zwelithini for giving preferential treatment to Indian and White young women while paying scant attention to the people who had been the backbone of the event since it was revived 29 years ago. In taking this position the young women echoed the criticism emanating from the *Nomkhubulwane* Cultural Institute which argued that the ceremony was a way in which African people communicated with their ancestors. Other races, in contrast, were participating in the ceremony for fun without understanding its meaning which would undermine the cultural identity of the event. Although not as eloquent in their pronouncements this was also what some of the young women were trying to say. To them the king exposed himself to criticism by trying to please other races and in so doing was changing the cultural meaning of the ceremony. As a result they doubted the future value of the ceremony especially since the Zulu royal family said it would not force young women from other races to experience the process of virginity testing and wear traditional attire as they were not part of their culture. Some of the young African women who participated in this study were therefore now asking why they are supposed to undergo virginity testing whereas Indian and White young women may attend the *Umhlanga* ceremony without undergoing any virginity testing.

The young African women who argued from a rights based position and those who argued from an Africanist one came from very different perspectives although they both shared a historical consciousness that pointed to a position of uncertainty if virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony would continue into the future. The difference was

that for the latter grouping the ceremony could be saved if the “purity” and perceived static nature of the ceremony is reinstated but for the former their participation was based on coercion since they clearly do not want their bodies to be used for cultural practices with little input from themselves. They also firmly believed that they had the constitution and what it stood for in the changing world they are living in to support them.

Other research participants were more undecided in their future perspective of the *Umhlanga* ceremony and virginity testing and were caught between wanting it to continue and for it to be abandoned. They are conflicted by the changes and politics surrounding virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony which makes the future for them to be an uncertain one which is difficult to predict. What worries them is modernizing developments which are breaking with the past such as the use of white and red clay as designators of virginity and the issuing of certificates to those who were tested and found to still be virgins. This means that those young women tested are, unlike in the past, known to the community and this makes them vulnerable to the unwanted target of men. In addition the young women argue that they have to now pay a certain amount of money to the *oNomezho* to buy soap as well as for the transport of the latter to attend meetings pertaining to virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. To the doubters about the future of virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony all this is an indication that those involved are not doing it for the right reasons but for financial and personal gain and to please a political system.

The doubters amongst the research participants are also conflicted by people in powerful positions who argue that virginity testing and all that it is related to is a violation of the Constitution. On the other hand other powerful people, especially politicians at a local level, do the opposite since they support it by providing financial aid as well as refreshments and in so doing influence the testing and the ceremony. This left some young African women in the dark not knowing which stand they should take with regard to virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony as a common idea or aim about the

Umhlanga ceremony and virginity testing no longer exists. Consequently they are deeply torn about the future of it.

From among the research participants a strong grouping existed who believed in virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. To them the testing and the ceremony were worthy of passing on from generation to generation and consequently it needed to be fostered and taught at home, in the community and from one to another. The incentives for them to continue to partake, and envisaging their daughters should they have any doing the same, is multiple. On a personal level one reason is that participation in the *Umhlanga* ceremony will increase their chances to escape sexually transmitted diseases, remain virgins and also not become pregnant before marriage. The other is more collective in nature namely that they as women are the custodians of African culture and also the keepers of moral values. As such virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony speaks to them on a nationalistic level in various ways. On a collective level they cling to the message of the king that through the *Umhlanga* ceremony the future of the nation lies in their hands for they are the keepers of the cultural wealth of the Zulu nation and must honour and share the historical achievements of the nation by, as one participant said, “strengthening peoples’ resolve to live for today and strive for tomorrow.” In this manner the king sends a message to the Zulu nation that the *Umhlanga* ceremony should always be practiced. But the message as understood by the young women is also to imply that the *Umhlanga* ceremony promotes a spirit of African nationalism. Hence the participation of Zulu-speaking people, Swazi-speaking and Xhosa-speaking young women participate in the *Umhlanga* ceremony alongside Zulu-speaking young women. This further serves to convince the young African that virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony will and must continue in future as it serves to strengthen the unity of African people.

The young women from among the participants who subscribe to this message believe that they are empowered to make the correct decisions about their lives. To them the young African women who do not participate in the *Umhlanga* ceremony tend to display a lack of ability in making the correct decisions with regard to their love affair

relationships since they did not receive proper nurturing from the elders including the *oNomezho* and the *Amaqhikiza*. As a result they often fall pregnant unnecessarily which results in having illegal and unsafe abortions so as to save their parents shame.

On a personal level those wanting the testing and the ceremony to continue are also enticed by the romantic idea of meeting the king at the *Umhlanga* ceremony and also the possibility, regardless of how slim or unrealistic it is, to be chosen by him to be one of his wives and in so doing “become the mother of the nation” which comes with much status and respect not only for themselves but also for their families.

It is clear that the young African women who participated in this study had a conflicting consciousness about the future of the *Umhlanga* ceremony. For some no good reasons existed for it to carry on into the future and as soon as they could take control of their own lives from the men who dominate them they would abandon the practice. For others the testing and the ceremony were worthy to maintain. Regardless of the consciousness adopted towards the future much of what the young women argued for was based on their own experiences in the present as it related to virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Irrespective of the position adopted towards the future what was clear was that virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony were constantly evolving and changing but also showing remarkable continuity.

4.5 Conclusion

It is clear that the historical consciousness of the young African women who participated in this study cannot be located to a single meaning as it related to virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony as it is expressed differently in the same context and space. It is also clear that while the past was viewed in a uniform manner the multifarious experiences of the present have created diverse visions of the future of the ceremony. Hence, the historical consciousness’s revealed that the present generation constructed their past in ways that make meaning to them and are useful to them based on the learning of the unofficial history of the virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* Ceremony.

In the next chapter the findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the theory and literature adopted for this study. Answers to the research questions posed will also be provided. The study will also be drawn to a close.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter can be seen as the level of analysis whereby the findings from chapter four will be discussed in relation to the research questions and theoretical literature. This helped me to distinguish those findings that confirmed the literature from the new knowledge as revealed by my research. Differently put, this chapter will propose the thesis in this study by troubling, enhancing, influencing and questioning the findings from the first level of analysis so as to try and understand the historical consciousness of young African women as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. In order to achieve this two research questions were formulated namely: What is the historical consciousness (relationship between the past, present and future) of young African women on the *Umhlanga* ceremony? Why do young African women have the historical consciousness (relationship between the past, present and future) regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony? Furthermore, the purpose of this final chapter was to draw a line under the research questions by highlighting possible answers and to present my thesis. This process was achieved through fieldwork which involved three sample groups from three different high schools in the area of Ixopo in southern KwaZulu-Natal. In all of this historical consciousness as the theoretical framework for this study was foregrounded. Historical consciousness thus served as a key orientation element that gave meaning to the relationship between the past, present and future.

The following is also included in this chapter: an overview of the content of the different chapters of this study; a discussion of the findings; a reflection of the short comings of the study; taking stock of my personal and professional growth through the study and the conclusion.

5.2 Overview of the Study

This research study consisted of five chapters. The chapters were linked in an intersexual manner in the sense that each, despite having a different purpose and focus, built on the previous in terms of the logical flow of the dissertation.

- In Chapter one I provided some background on the *Umhlanga* ceremony, outlined the purpose and focus of the study, explained the rationale and motivation for conducting the research, stated the research questions and provided a route map of the methodology and the theoretical framework adopted as well as the chapters that were to follow.
- In Chapter two I reviewed the research literature related to the main concepts of the study. This was done in a thematic manner with the focus on: clarifying historical consciousness, ceremonies and rituals in learning unofficial history and official history learning as it related to historical consciousness.
- Chapter three dealt with the research methodology followed in completing this dissertation. It was divided into three major sections. In the first I discussed the research design, in the second the research methodology and in the third the research methods adopted for this study.
- Chapter four was the first level of data analysis whereby the research methodology as explained in chapter three came to fruition. The data obtained were analysed and presented in a narrative manner. The focus in the narrative was constantly on the historical consciousness, in other words the relationship between the past, present and future, of the young African women who participated in this study on the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

- The final chapter was Chapter five. This chapter served as the second level analysis whereby the findings gleaned from the previous chapter were compared and contrasted to the literature. This was done through a comparison of the findings in relation to their convergence and divergence to both theoretical as well as research literature. This resulted in the final answering of the research questions posed. In this chapter I also reflected on the study.

5.3 Discussion of the findings

In this section the findings abstracted from the analysis done in chapter 4 will be discussed. More specifically I will focus on historical consciousness as the connection of interpretations of the past perceptions of the present and expectations of the future (Angvik, 1997). In other words the historical consciousness of the young African women who participated in this study as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony will be discussed. In the process the discussion will confirm the literature as reviewed in chapter 2 but will also diverge from it in the form of new knowledge. In other words, by troubling, enhancing, influencing and questioning the findings from the first level of analysis in chapter 4 I will hopefully come to an understanding of why the historical consciousness of the research participants on the *Umhlanga* ceremony are the way they are.

The first clear finding is that the young African women, in terms of the relationship between the past, present and future as far as the *Umhlanga* ceremony was concerned, had a very limited consciousness of the past of the ceremony. Not only did they not know the deep history of it (that Shaka terminated it) but they also had a limited understanding of the ceremony as a contemporary phenomenon that was reintroduced in 1984 and is thus less than 30-years' old. What they did do was to imagine the past of the ceremony as being equal to the story of the creation of the Zulu people and told it metaphorically in that manner from the presentist position they are now in. According to Tosh (1984) human memory, collective or social can be faulty, distorted by factors such as sense of tradition or else a belief in progress through time. The young African women who participated had a historical consciousness of this nature – they thus used the one

aspect that tied them as participants together from the past, their Zuluness, to take a story that they know and use it to tell a story of the *Umhlanga* ceremony. They therefore used the story of the creation of the Zulu nation as an all-encompassing metaphor to relate the story of the past of the *Umhlanga* ceremony which as a result mirrored the story of the creation of the Zulu nation. As such their historical consciousness of the *Umhlanga* ceremony was more imagined than real and had limited relevance to the actual events. It consequently also had a limited relationship with the present and future aspects of their historical consciousness as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony.

Because of the historical consciousness that existed about the past of the *Umhlanga* ceremony a tension existed in terms of the changes and continuities into the present they experienced and the future they imagined. Their historical consciousness of the *Umhlanga* ceremony in the present was filled with ambiguities on almost all aspects and at face value it seems that it was more about change from what the ceremony was like in the past than continuity into the present. Their historical consciousness was very much an experience of the present and all the present ideas on male involvement, commercial and political gain and other uses of the ceremony. In the view of Tosh, "Following the path laid down by the ancestors has a great deal to be said for it in communities that neither experience change nor expect it; for them present and past can scarcely be distinguished" (p.13, 1984). This was definitely not the case in this study because the path laid down by the ancestors was not that clear and are 30-years into the reinvention of the ceremony which is still evolving. This evolving is happening in a context of a fast changing world, even in the Ixopo district from which the research participants came. The dynamic of social and cultural change such as the mass-media, social media, school, Western ideas and ideas related to law and rights in post-apartheid South Africa all impacted on the historical consciousness about the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The result was a double historical consciousness filled with ambiguity, sometimes within the same participant, as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony and how it was learnt about as history.

A clear finding to be abstracted is that unofficial history is a very powerful way of learning about the past. The young African women who participated in this study in learning about the *Umhlanga* ceremony did so in a typically unofficial historical manner – community-based; partially structured; learnt from a range of people including family members, parents, peers, the community, the *oNomezho* and *amaqhikiza*; coercion was involved; learning took place in no fixed manner and it differed from village to village and individual participant to individual participant. In all of this they were expected to be uncritical and they had to draw on a past few understood as a means to control their participation in the present (Phillips, 1998). Learning unofficial history in such a manner is very powerful and forceful and sometimes borders on indoctrination as a set of unofficial historical facts about rituals and social practices are absorbed. What must be remembered is that cultural ceremonies and practices are for the most part not about academic debates but acceptance of what is practiced. As such the *Umhlanga* ceremony is also an experienced history - practiced towards the end of August or September in the presence of the Zulu king. Questions such as why and how it happened are thus not always relevant questions for historical consciousness creation in this regard for this is about recreating the events of the past so that these events can be implanted in the long term memories of people (Tosh, 1984).

This unofficial learning stands in stark contrast to the school history that was learnt – both in terms of the content and the pedagogy involved. What is therefore clear is that a tension exists between the learning of unofficial history as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony, both in terms of content and the pedagogy followed, and what the young African women learn officially as per the curriculum – be it history or any other subject. What they learn in school is scientifically-based, supported by official curricula, contained in textbooks and a structured academic year, supported by the official voice of teachers as agents of the state and tested as a powerful message that must be mastered to progress in life in, for example, examinations. The cultural heritage and the acknowledgement of certain African social practices such as the *Umhlanga* ceremony is not really valued by official history and the school system. The tension between these two worlds of history learning, which comes to a head annually during the trial

examinations which coincide with the ceremony, creates a double consciousness. This is a historical consciousness torn between tradition and modernity, Africa and the West, traditional laws and cultures and a liberal constitution; free will and coercion and official and unofficial history.

A further finding was that although the experiences of the *Umhlanga* ceremony and the related rituals were collective in nature it was also a highly individual experience which lead to multiple historical consciousnesses as it related to the past, the present and the future amongst the research participants. As a result the relationship to the *Umhlanga* ceremony came across as a love hate relationship between the research participants and the practice. Consequently some of the young African women embraced and rejected the ceremony in equal measures, others rejected it outright and others embraced it completely. But what they all had to do was to wrestle with the changes and continuities the *Umhlanga* ceremony has been subjected to in a fast changing society and world. The result was that a shared national view was not revealed as part of a collective historical consciousness (Toshchenko, 2011). According to Angvik (1997) understanding is different from person to person and from group to group, since it reflects people's opinions, views and feelings in a democratic country (like South Africa) where it is acceptable for people to have different ways of understanding of the past, the present and the future.

A further finding was that the research participants had the metaphorical idea of being lions in a circus – they have to perform but were not receiving any of the earnings. The argument was that people other than themselves associated with the *Umhlanga* ceremony were benefiting economically and financially or in terms of prestige, at the expense of young African women who had to endure the practice of virginity testing and the *Umhlanga* ceremony. Therefore, the young African women, in many instances, failed to understand why people such as their parents; *oNomezho*; *amaqhikiza*; politicians and so forth were having an upper hand over their lives, over their bodies and over the law. Associated with this was a sceptical historical consciousness about the ceremony. These ideas of conflict in their historical consciousness is best encapsulated

by Wineburg (1991) and Ravitch (1989) who point to the difference between what young people know against what young people can do. In this case they know, based on experience and learning, a lot but have not achieved, due to their age and gender a position where they could do much about their position.

In all of this the young African women who participated in this study had limited agency in shaping their own historical consciousness. For the most part their historical consciousness, as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony, was shaped by experiences controlled by a patriarchal society via politics linked to commercial endeavours with the king and ideas of Africanism being central. An appropriation of the past in this manner must be considered, in the view of Lyotard (1984), in the light that history has been subjected to the same forces of consumerism and consumption experienced in other features of economic, social and cultural life. However, what must also be remembered was that these ideas were challenged by the mass media and politicians who did not view the ceremony as positive. Although this did not give the research participants immediate agency it impacted on how they thought about the future and the *Umhlanga* ceremony as part of their historical consciousness.

As a result, as found in this study, some research participants exhibited a rejection of the *Umhlanga* ceremony in their own vision of the future as part of their historical consciousness because it was viewed as a violation of their human rights and the Constitution which to them was to guarantee their human dignity. To them these laws trumped African practices and needed to be upheld. This was a key part of their world view. Some of the more articulate young African women pointed to the fact that the Constitution protected human rights in general and children's rights in particular. They also foregrounded Section 12 (1) of the Constitution, without legally quoting it, by explaining that everyone has the right to freedom and security of person, which includes the right not to be tortured in any way and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. The young African women who thought in this manner argued that young African women should not have to display their vaginas during a virginity testing process to other people. To them the process of virginity testing and the

associated *Umhlanga* ceremony was degrading and humiliating. Those who had had such a historical consciousness admitted that they were under pressure from all sides, including their parents and the community, and hence they partook for they wanted to please all concerned parties, apart from themselves. In some cases some young African women do this to the extent of even using artificial hymens. Their historical consciousness, based on their own experiences of the process, is a negative one as far as the *Umhlanga* ceremony is concerned.

However, the opposite was also true with many of the young African women embracing the idea of virginity testing and the related *Umhlanga* ceremony. This they did for a variety of reasons ranging from Africanists ideas of African unity; protection against diseases and unwanted pregnancies; being as women the keepers of Zulu history and culture up to the chance of meeting the king. The two different positions reveal the complicated nature of it all as these young African women saw a future in their consciousness for the ceremony. Thus the research process, as far as the historical consciousness of the young women who partook in the study is concerned, revealed divergent views on the future of the *Umhlanga* ceremony and the related virginity testing practices. Rauche (1990) describes this as being a state of historical consciousness that speaks to an awareness of a person's current socio-political position being conditioned by a string of historical events of the past that are of a cultural, social and political nature. As such it is a perception and evaluation of the past and reveals the diversity in groups in society and individuals (Toshchenko, 2011).

It can be concluded therefore that the historical consciousness of the research participants as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony is based on very unpredictable contemporary circumstances that are most fluid. This is so because the research process revealed that the ever changing world that the young African women found themselves in was reason enough to feel certain that the *Umhlanga* ceremony was in an uncertain position in their consciousness. This changing world filled with ambivalence as it related to Westernization, culture and political involvement, gave a sense that a common idea or aim about the *Umhlanga* ceremony and virginity testing no

longer exists. The research participants were thus undecided in their future perspective of the *Umhlanga* ceremony and virginity testing and were caught between wanting it to continue and for it to be abandoned. Their historical consciousness was therefore not necessarily an expression of organization, preservation and replication of the past experiences of nationality and culture (Tosh, 1984). The consciousness of the young African women who participated in this study could therefore best be described as being a double consciousness that is a historical consciousness torn between tradition and modernity; African and Western; unofficial and official history the past and the present and the future as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. In a sense this double consciousness is the closest they will perceive of a collective historical consciousness.

In this the historical consciousness of the young African women who participated in this study is not fully aligned to the practice of the *Umhlanga* ceremony and the reasons for it are explained in chapter one. Although many of the young African women uphold the message of the king that the future of the Zulu nation, as keepers of traditions, culture and history lies in their hands, if they remain virgins, appealed, numerous others were sceptical. They were not necessarily taken in by it all and had alternative ideas that were much more individual than collective in nature. Simply put the young African women who argued from a rights-based position and those who argued from an Africanist one came from very different perspectives. The latter were more likely to appropriate the past to compensate for their anxiety about the future (Furedi, 1992) as also happened in the case of this study.

It is clear that historical consciousness as people's peculiar power to project a self-reflective temporal sensibility upon the world around them and to transfer the temporal organization of their own experiences to the ordering of the collective life of the community rang true for the young African women who participated in this study (Marcus, 1980). This they upheld by a construction of the past in a way that was useful to them in terms of what they deemed to be honoured in the present and passed on to the future. In doing so they made choices about how interpretations of the past perceptions of the present and expectations of the future should interrelate. This, as it

relates to the historical consciousness of the young African women who participated in this study, has no single meaning but multiple ones, for culture is dynamic and open to change and adaptation, as explained in this discussion of the findings as a final attempt to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

Finally I feel the need to return to the section on postmodernism as discussed in my literature review chapter. The multiple and diverse findings point to the inhabiting, by the research participants, of an interstitial space structured by ambivalence and forged by competing and converging influences. This point to a certain fragmentation and discontinuity and a world of alienation, paradoxes and ambivalence. The result was an experience of disjointedness, instability and disorientation and the fragmentation of the meaning of the *Umhlanga* Ceremony and how it relates to the past, present and future.

5.4 Shortcomings of the study

All research studies have shortcomings and this dissertation was no different. The major shortcoming of my study relates to the methodology I employed. The research sample consisted of a small number of purposively selected young African women from the Ixopo area. The sample size, and the methodology employed – semi-structured focus group interviews and émigré reflections – make it impossible to generalise the findings in a general manner. The findings are therefore not transferable to contexts outside the scope of this study.

Furthermore, the *Umhlanga* ceremony and virginity testing are sensitive issues and although my focus was on the historical consciousness related to it and not the actual “physical examination” my research therefore, in all probability, did not reveal the full picture. The full story, like any other story on how, for example, the young African women learnt the unofficial history related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony was in all likelihood “always elusive, always deferred, always multiple, always somewhat paradoxical” (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p.103).

My study foregrounded the historical consciousness of young African women as it related to the *Umhlanga* ceremony. The study could easily have been a study which foregrounded gender and my choice not to do so can also be viewed as a shortcoming. Similarly the fact that race was not foregrounded along with gender can be viewed as a limitation.

5.5 Personal and professional reflections on the study

In my rationale and motivation for doing this dissertation, as explained in Chapter 1, I pointed out I wanted to gain an understanding of the tension between official and unofficial history, and also gain an understanding of the historical consciousness of the learners caught-up in this, namely young black African women. This study was, therefore a personal quest driven by that fact that my experience as a history teacher revealed to me that even though South Africa is blessed in terms of cultural and unofficial history, and how it is learnt, is not given the same value as official history. To me this was a problem worth investigation - to try and understand how, in an unofficial history learning context, away from curricula and textbooks, historical consciousness is acquired.

This quest has developed me personally and professionally. On one level I have gained an in-depth understanding of the intricacies surrounding the *Umhlanga* ceremony and the historical consciousness it creates among young African women. As such this study has broadened my knowledge and understanding underpinning issues such as historical consciousness; the *Umhlanga* ceremony and its related events; young African women and the relationship of the afore-mentioned to unofficial history as a construct.

Doing this study has also assisted me in refining and shaping my critical thinking skills as well as my academic research skills. I must admit that when I started this dissertation my thinking about the practices and rituals were very narrow and simplistic. However, by researching this topic and the engagements at conferences, in the History Education post-graduate cohort and with my supervisor have helped to shape my thinking.

Furthermore, through this study I went to places and engaged with people with whom I otherwise would not have engaged. This has greatly enriched my life. In engaging with people I also had to learn to overcome challenges – for example issues around obtaining my data as well as dealing with the emotions of the participants in this study.

Doing this study will hopefully not only help me to improve my qualification but also enriched both my personal and professional growth which encompasses deeper knowledge about the complications about African social practices outside of formal education. Hopefully I can, by doing this dissertation, contribute to not only the knowledge about the *Umhlanga* ceremony but also on how learners learn about unofficial history.

5.6 Conclusion

This study focused on the historical consciousness of young African women regarding the *Umhlanga* ceremony. This study also examined the intricacy and opacity of the historical consciousness concept within a specific context and times frame – post-apartheid South Africa. What I have found is that the historical consciousness of the young African women who participated in this study as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony was not a neat, agreed-upon collective one. It was rather individual in nature and was at the same time ambiguous, uncertain and contradictory and assured. This was the case because they had all experienced the phenomenon in different ways and were influenced by numerous factors such as the role of the king, Africanness, official and unofficial learning of history, politics, commercial interests, human rights and the South African constitution to name but a few of the factors. Hence, their historical consciousness as the connection of interpretations of the past, perceptions of the present and expectations of the future as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony was not a neat agreed-upon master narrative.

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APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance UKZN – submitted to principals as well



11 March 2013

Mr Gilbert S Nxumalo 212560313
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Nxumalo

Protocol reference number: HSS/0110/013M
Project title: Young People and the UMHLANGA Ceremony: A case study in Historical Consciousness

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process. **EXPEDITED APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Johan Wasserman
cc Academic Leader: Dr MN Davids
cc School Admin.: Miss Bongekile Bhengu

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Funding Campus: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS



Appendix B: Letter of application to conduct research in school



Dear Sir / Madam

APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

M Ed research title: **YOUNG AFRICAN WOMEN AND THE *UMHLANGA* CEREMONY: A CASE IN STUDY HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.**

I wish to apply for permission to conduct research in your school on some female learners aged 16 to 19. The fore most aim of this study was to understand the historical consciousness of young African women as it relates to the *Umhlanga* ceremony and more specifically their sense on how the past, present and future are related and intertwined and exercise influence on each other - in other words their historical consciousness of the event and how this is acquired as a form of unofficial History education.

Thank you for your co-operation

Yours Faithfully

GILBERT S. NXUMALO

APPENDIX C: Informed consent form for parents

Letter of application to conduct research



M Ed research title: YOUNG AFRICAN WOMEN AND THE *UMHLANGA* CEREMONY: A CASE STUDY HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

The aim of this study is to understand the historical consciousness of young African women, i.e. age 16 to 19 years old in Ixopo area on how they understand the practice of *Umhlanga* ceremony. With this study I would also like to contribute to the development of knowledge and thinking regarding the practice of this cultural activity (*Umhlanga*) in the ever changing technological societies.

Your daughter has been identified to participate in the research of the *Umhlanga* ceremony. I would like to conduct an interview with her on the above-mentioned research title. I will write and tape record her views during the interview and it will take approximately 45 – 60 minutes. The data will be anonymous i.e. it will not be possible to link it to this research. She will not be disadvantaged if she decides not to participate or to withdraw from the interview.

I..... (full names of parent) hereby confirm that understand the contents of this document and nature of the research project and I allow my daughter to participate in the research project.

Signature of parent

Date

Appendix D: Informed consent form for participants



M Ed research title: YOUNG AFRICAN WOMEN AND THE *UMHLANGA* CEREMONY: A CASE STUDY HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

The aim of this study is to understand historical consciousness of young African women, i.e. age 16 to 19 years old in Ixopo area on how they experienced the practice of *Umhlanga* ceremony. With this study I would also like to contribute to the development of knowledge and thinking regarding the practice of this cultural activity (*Umhlanga*) in the ever changing technological societies. At the end of the interview I would like my interviewees to have acquired the indigenous knowledge systems and understanding what gives rise to the particular behaviour (resistance) that young African women tell of *Umhlanga* historical experience.

You have been identified to participate to the research of *Umhlanga* ceremony. I would like to conduct an interview with you on the above-mentioned research title. I will write and tape record your views during the interview and it will take approximately 45 – 60 minutes. The data will be anonymous i.e. it will not be possible to link to this research. You will not be disadvantaged if you decide not to participate or to withdraw from the interview.

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that understand the contents of this document and nature of the research project and I consent to participate in the research project. I understand that I am free to leave or withdraw from the project at any time, if I want to.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix E: Turnitin Certificate

Turnitin Originality Report

Gilbert Nxumalo

From Thesis Plagiarism check - Part 1 (Moodle 12330397) (2010 Education Postgraduate support group (Moodle 3862849))

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