

**ADOLESCENT ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY : A STUDY DONE  
AT BOYS' TOWN, TONGAAT**

**by**

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**A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

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## **DEDICATION**

**This dissertation is dedicated to**

**My late father**

**Mr C C Reddy**

**in recognition of his love, devotion, support and encouragement through the  
years.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**I thank God for giving me strength, opportunity and courage to embark on and complete this degree**

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## **DECLARATION**

**The Registrar (Academic)**

**University of Durban-Westville**

**Dear Sir**

**I, Amutha Govender , Reg. No. : 7709873, registered for the degree M.Ed (Ed.**

**Psych), hereby declare that the dissertation entitled:**

**ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS TO AUTHORITY: A STUDY DONE AT BOYS' TOWN,  
TONGAAT**

**is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been  
submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.**

  
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**AMUTHA GOVENDER**

22 APRIL 2004  
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**DATE**

## **ABSTRACT**

**The present study investigates the attitude of adolescents to authority. Thirty-eight adolescents from Boys' Town, Tongaat, participated in this study.**

**The intention of the study was to investigate the attitude of the boys to authority and to determine whether there was a difference in attitude to authority according to grade, race, parental academic background or type of family structure that the boys had.**

**Generally the adolescents at Boys' Town, Tongaat, viewed the mother as authoritarian and the father as authoritative/flexible. Boys in grade 6-9 viewed both mother and father as authoritative/flexible while boys in grade 10-12 viewed both mother and father as permissive. The Indian and black adolescents viewed mother and father as authoritative/flexible while the white and coloured adolescents viewed mother and father as permissive. When parents had grade 12 or less qualification both mother and father were viewed as permissive. When parents had a post-matric qualification, both mother and father were viewed as authoritative/ flexible. Adolescents from single-family households found mother to be authoritative/flexible and father to be authoritarian. Adolescents from nuclear-family households found mother to be equally permissive and authoritative/flexible and father to be permissive. Adolescents from extended-family households found mother to be permissive and father to be authoritative/flexible. Adolescents from foster families found both mother and father to be authoritative/flexible.**

**The positive changes that were brought about in the adolescents and in their**

**relationship with their environment during their stay at Boys' Town, Tongaat, leads to the recommendation that the behaviour modification programme and the parenting skills workshop adopted by Boys' Town, be examined and assessed with the possible consideration for implementation at South African Schools and homes.**

**KEY TERMS: Attitude; adolescents, authority.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2. Rationale for the study	3
1.3. Purpose of study	6
1.4. Critical Questions	7
1.5. Aims of Study	7
1.6. The Research Focus	7
1.7. Research Methodology	8
1.8. Structure of the Research Study	8
<b>CHAPTER 2 : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1. Introduction	10
2.2. Conception of Attitude	10
2.3. Attitude Formation	13
2.4. Attitude of Adolescents	15
2.5. Measurement of Attitudes	19
2.5.1. The Census of Opinions	19
2.5.2. The <i>a priori</i> Scale	19
2.5.3. The Psychophysical (Rational) Scale	20
2.5.4. Open-ended questions	21
2.5.5. Projective Techniques	22
2.6. Summary	22

<b>CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1. Introduction	24
3.2. Adolescent Attitude to Institutional Authority	24
3.3. Parenting Styles and Conceptions of Parental Authority	26
3.4. Authority and Friendship Issues	27
3.5. Attitudes Towards Authority of Adolescents under Family Supervision	29
3.6. South African Adolescents' Explanations for Juvenile Delinquency	31
3.7. Summary	32
 <b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	 <b>34</b>
4.1. Introduction	34
4.2. Research Design	35
4.3. Population and Sample	35
4.4. Research Instrument	37
4.4.1. The use of the Questionnaire	37
4.4.1.1. Question content	38
4.4.1.2. Question format	40
4.4.1.3. Question type	40
4.4.1.4. Question formulation	42
4.4.1.5. Pilot study	43
4.4.2. Observation	44
4.4.3. The use of Documentary Sources	45
4.4.4. The semi-structured Interview	45
4.5. Administering of Instrument	46





<b>6.5. Recommendations</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>6.5.1. Mandatory Basic Counselling Courses for all educators</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>6.5.2. Mandatory Parenting Skills Course</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>6.5.3. Behaviour Modification Programmes</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>6.6. Limitations of Study</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>6.7. Summary</b>	<b>84</b>
 <b>REFERENCES</b>	 <b>86</b>
 <b>APPENDICES</b>	 <b>89</b>
<b>Appendix 1      Questionnaire</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Interview questions</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Appendix 2      Correspondence</b>	<b>94</b>

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Figure 1 : Age of respondents</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Figure 2 : Reasons for placement in Boys' Town</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Figure 3 : Attitude of adolescents in Boys' Town, Tongaat, to authority</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Figure 4 : Attitude to authority of adolescents in grades 6 to 9</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Figure 5 : Attitude to authority of adolescents in grades 10 to 12</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Figure 6 : Attitude of Whites to authority</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Figure 7 : Attitude of Blacks to authority</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Figure 8 : Attitude of Indians to authority</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Figure 9 : Attitude of Coloureds to authority</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Figure 10: Attitude of adolescents whose mothers have a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Figure 11: Attitude to authority of adolescents whose fathers have a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Figure 12: Attitude to authority of adolescents whose mothers have post-matric qualification</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Figure 13: Attitude to authority of adolescents whose fathers have post-matric qualification</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Figure 14: Attitude of adolescents to authority from single parent households</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Figure 15: Attitude of adolescents from nuclear families to authority</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Figure 16: Attitude of adolescents from extended families to authority</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Figure 17: Attitude of adolescents from foster care to authority</b>	<b>69</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Table 1 : Respondents by grade level of school &amp; the number of possible responses</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Table 2 : Attitude of adolescents by grade level and authority styles</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Table 3 : Responses by Racial groupings</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Table 4 : Attitude to authority figure by racial groupings</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Table 5 : Respondents by parental educational background</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Table 6 : Attitudes to authority by grade level and parental educational background</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Table 7 : Respondents by Family type</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Table 8 : Attitude to authority by Family type</b>	<b>70</b>

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. BACKGROUND**

Adolescence is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood ( Crow and Crow, 1965) or from dependence on adult direction and protection to self-direction and self-determination. G Stanley Hall (Crow & Crow, 1965) regarded adolescence as the period of ‘ storm and stress’. Friedenberg (Crow & Crow, 1965), on the other hand, describes adolescence as a period during which a young person learns who he is, and what he really feels.

Since the teen years represent a period in an individual’s life of finding himself as a person, there is likely to be some struggle within the maturing adolescent as he attempts to determine his rights and responsibilities with adults and within his peer groups. He begins to want to make his own decisions and to experience freedom of action. He no longer regards himself as a child; he demands independence, but often discovers that he is not ready to manage his own affairs. He needs adult help in solving his many emotional, social, and other adjustment problems, yet he may resent adult assistance when it is offered to him (Crow & Crow, 1965).

If the developmental progress is to be socially acceptable and effective, a young person’s transition from childhood to adult status must proceed gradually under the guidance of self-disciplined adults. Too much and too suddenly gained liberty leads to adolescent confusion. The adolescent may become prey to destructive forces. Adult overprotection or domination may arouse in the teenager strong feelings of resentment, or it may result in retarded personal or social development. Adolescent confusion and conflict can be intensified as young people are exposed to contradictions between what

adults say should be done and what adults actually do Crow & Crow,1965).

In the researcher's work with adolescents over the last two decades, as an educator at secondary schools, a number of problems associated with 'growing up' have been observed. In the process of identity formation, and due to their development, adolescents take risks, question adult values and in the process may fall foul of the law. Some are particularly very critical about adults' value and may employ rebellion as a response. On the other hand many youth rebel and fall foul of societal laws because of abuse and injustices they suffer in a system which they perceive should be more understanding, supportive and respectful of their rights.

No society can tolerate violence, and youth unable to bring their problem behaviour under control are placed in institutions where they could be assisted to live a good life both as youth and also as adults. Hence the setting up of an institution like Boys' Town in Tongaat, which is a children's home offering care and treatment for boys who range from the under-privileged and neglected to the problematic. Boys who, in some way or the other, have come into friction with authority are taught coping skills to help them deal with authority – authority at home, authority in the environment they live in and authority in school.

In 2002, while the researcher was a student psychologist, she had the opportunity to work with juvenile prisoners at the Westville Prison. She was both appalled and saddened by the plight of the young offenders. Many of them had turned to crime because they had lost faith in and respect for the authority that governed their lives.

Many of these adolescents had dropped out of school and turned to the streets for survival – and hence to a life of moral decay and crime. South African juvenile prisons are filled beyond capacity because of adolescents who

have defied authority and broken societal laws. This research intends to examine the attitude of adolescents at Boys' Town Tongaat, towards authority and to determine, if possible, the extent to which society in general and schools in particular, could assist adolescents in developing a more positive and healthy attitude towards authority.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

At birth a baby is not a socially orientated being. Only through interaction with people does he/she learn to adapt to the social community and conform to culturally-prescribed norms. Family life determines to a great extent how the baby will handle social situations in later life. He has not yet a conscience, and the social group's moral codes are conveyed to him by means of imitation and teaching by parents and later friends, teachers and others (Cronje, Van Der Walt, Retief & Naude, 1986).

Because of his immaturity the pre-school child does not argue about right and wrong, but accepts what the parents approve as good and what they dislike as bad. By means of self-discipline the child is taught to conform to the standards of the group.

Discipline includes not only punishment but also factors such as reward, praise and approval (Cronje, Van Der Walt, Retief & Naude, 1986).

In later childhood (6 to 12 years) and as the individual matures to adolescence the intellectual development is at a more advance stage over the previous period of development. The adolescent can now think abstractly and question values held by adults. The adolescent period is a period of identity formation when the individual searches for himself. Part of this search is also the solidarity with the peer group for support, assurance and information. However his association with children of other

family backgrounds brings him into contact with an array of values from which to choose. As his horizons broaden he often discovers that what is regarded as right or wrong at home is not necessarily held to be so by others. Thus he sometimes develops new moral standards which can differ from those of his parents. This can result in rebellion against authority (Cronje, Van Der Walt, Retief & Naude, 1986).

The adolescent period (13 to 19 years) is associated with many adjustment problems which can be attributed mainly to rapid physical and psychological changes which cause confusion, insecurity and opposition to authority. Du Plessis (Cronje, Van Der Walt, Retief & Naude, 1986) points out that this is a critical period in the development of any adolescent and is associated with considerable inner conflict, ever-increasing resistance to authority and conflict with parents.

A negative attitude of learners to authority and the resultant conflict can have an adverse effect on the learning process. Historically learners, in South Africa, feared authority: at home, at school, and in the community or country. This fear motivated them to attend school, study hard, complete all tasks, follow all rules and obey all adults.

The post-apartheid era introduced a climate that opposed authority and created conflict both at home and in school. Learners had been made aware of their rights as laid down in the South African Constitution, example:

- the right to freedom of expression
- the right to equality
- the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion
- the right to live in a safe environment



- the right to education and
- the right not to be forced to do work that will hurt or make it difficult for them to go to school.

The democratic system of governance that brought about these rights with the dismantling of the apartheid system in early 1990s needed not only to be practiced at government level but also in the homes and schools. Thus corporal punishment was banned in schools while parents were made aware of their treatment of their children which could pass for child abuses or infringement of the rights of the child.

Adolescents and youth in general however are still finding it hard to align to this new system.

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwane (2000), the main problems in South Africa's education system are undoubtedly related to the troubled past, and particularly to the policy of apartheid and its consequences. The schools were the main grounds of resistance to the inhumane treatment of racial segregation of the apartheid system and adolescents and youth are the "instruments" of resistance.

Adolescent learners protested against all form of oppression and authority and especially the inhumane treatment that accompanied racial segregation. The question that needs to be asked however is: Has the attitude of the learner changed since the late 1980s and early 1990s?

Historically educators had been revered and feared. Recently the media has projected a rather negative view of educators. Has this in any way affected the view that learners of today have of educators?

Environmental and social factors can either help resolve conflict for the learner or

they could create obstacles to positive learning and growth. Corporal punishment has been abolished in schools. Parents today can be charged with child abuse. Has this empowered the learner to live his life as he wills or is there still awe and respect for authority figures?

The extended family today appears to be the exception rather than the norm. Nuclear families, and more recently single parenting have become a common form of the family structure. The absentee father has led to the patriarchal hold and influence in many homes to weaken. Working parents mean unattended children after school hours. The television has become for many the unofficial 'nanny'.

In the absence of authority figures to guide children in decision-making and character building, they learn moral and social values from peers and television. The unwholesome image of life that children view on the screen could have quite an influence on the way they view relationships and authority. This could cause conflict if authority figures do not share the views projected by television programmes that the learner admires and emulates.

In the various situations depicted above there is a need for intervention. However, before intervention there is a need to find out from the major role-players like the youth what their attitudes are and the factors that promote the attitude to authority.

### **1.3. PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to find out the attitude of adolescents in Boys' Town, Tongaat, to authority. The main concern of the study is to find out what causes this

attitude and to investigate the impact of this attitude on their academic and psychological development.

#### **1.4.CRITICAL QUESTIONS**

The following critical questions will be asked:

- 1.4.1. What is the attitude of adolescents in Boys' Town, Tongaat to authority?
- 1.4.2. Is there a difference in attitude to authority amongst boys of different grades?
- 1.4.3. Is there a difference in attitude to authority amongst Indian, white, coloured and black boys?
- 1.4.4. Does the parental academic background affect the attitude of boys to authority?
- 1.4.5. Does the type of family (e.g. single parent, nuclear family, extended family) the adolescent boy comes from influence his attitude to authority?

#### **1.5.AIMS OF STUDY**

Therefore the aims of the study is to find out the attitude to authority of adolescents in Boys' Town Tongaat. Specifically the study was designed to find out whether attitude to authority differed in respect to grade level, race, parental academic background and family types.

#### **1.6.THE RESEARCH FOCUS**

The researcher has chosen to conduct the study at Boys' Town Tongaat, a children's home, which was established as a residential unit in 1978. The need for such a service is reflected in the numerous applications and enquiries received every year. This need, according to the principal Mr T Morar, was also empirically confirmed in a research study conducted by the HSRC during 1989.

The same issues which were identified as risk factors for youth in 1989, although different, have intensified. In fact it is worsened by the increased levels of

unemployment, poverty, gangsterism, moral decay, poor housing, socio-economic realities and family breakdowns. These risks are further exacerbated by poor inter/intra familial relationships, lack of community resources, poor role modelling, large classrooms, fewer teachers, school dropouts and a lack of/or poorly developed social and life skills to function effectively within society.

The sample in this study will be the entire population of adolescent boys. This totals fifty-two boys. The focus will be on the attitude of the adolescent boys to authority and the possible conflict and changes that might arise in their interaction with the world around them as a result of the programme that is used at Boys' Town Tongaat. The programme is geared primarily toward providing developmental care within a residential setting for adolescent boys who are presenting challenging behaviours within their family and settings and who are subsequently at risk of moving deeper into the justice system. Its parallel focus is on empowering the parents and emphasising family reunification processes.

### **1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Both the quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection were employed.

Due to the comprehensive nature of information required, this multiple approach was adopted. The tools for data collection included:

- a questionnaire (structured)
- observation
- students' records (kept by the school), and
- interview.

### **1.8. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

Chapter One is introduction to the study. It states the purpose of the study, the rationale, the critical questions asked, the focus of the study and a brief statement on the methodology used.

Chapter Two provides the theoretical framework on which this study is based.

Chapter Three explores the literature that is available, both in South Africa and abroad on learners' attitude to authority.

Chapter four presents the research methodology adopted in this study.

Chapter Five presents results, data analysis and interpretation in light of the critical research questions.

Chapter Six presents the discussions, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is devoted to:

- the definition or conception of the key term “attitude”
- examining the formation of attitudes with particular reference to adolescent attitudes and attitude to authority
- analysing some methods used in the measurement of attitudes.

#### **2.2 CONCEPTION OF ATTITUDE**

In 1918 Thomas and Znaniecki (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) viewed attitudes as individual mental processes that determine a person’s actual and potential responses.

In 1931 Thurstone (Naidoo,1966:5) defined attitude in these words:

‘...I define attitude as the intensity of positive affect for or against any symbol, person, phrase slogan, or idea about which people argue as to endorsement or rejection ... Attitude is the affect for or against a psychological object ... the positive or negative affect constitutes a linear continuum with a neutral point or zone and two opposite directions, one positive and the other negative...’

Throughout the thirties psychologists reiterated similar definitions about the nature of attitudes. Thus Bogartus (Naidoo,1966:6) defines attitude as ‘ a tendency to act toward or against some environmental factor which becomes thereby positive or negative value’.

Likewise, Allport in 1935 (Naidoo,1966), after reviewing many definitions of

attitude, concluded that an attitude was a learned predisposition to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way. He said that it was 'a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related'.

Rokeach (1968:16) analysed and defined attitude further as 'a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner.' Each belief within an attitude organisation is conceived to have three components:

- a *cognitive* component, because it represents a person's knowledge, held with varying degrees of certitude, about what is true or false, good or bad, desirable or undesirable (Rokeach, 1968);
- an *affective* component, because under suitable conditions the belief is capable of arousing affect of varying intensity centering around the object of the belief, around other objects (individuals or groups) taking a positive or negative position with respect to the object of belief, or around the belief itself, when its validity is seriously questioned, as in an argument (Rokeach, 1968);
- and a *behavioural* component, because the belief, being a response predisposition of varying threshold, must lead to some action when it is suitably activated. The kind of action it leads to is dictated strictly by the content of the belief (Rokeach, 1968).

Rosenberg and Hovland (1969:21) shared Rokeach's view of attitude. They defined



attitude as ‘predispositions to respond in a particular way toward a specified class of objects’. They believed that attitudes being predispositions are not directly observable or measurable. Instead they are inferred from the way we react to particular stimuli. Saying that a learner has an unfavourable attitude towards educators leads us to expect that he will perceive their actions with distrust, will have strong negative feelings toward them, and will tend to avoid them socially. Thus when attitudes are studied what are observed are the evoking stimuli on the one hand and the various types of response on the other.

Rosenberg and Hovland (1969) also categorise the types of response that are commonly used as ‘indices’ of attitudes into the three groups : cognitive, affective and behavioural. This has been done because despite the fact that two persons respond in the same way on one specific index of attitude (e.g. how they vote on a school concert proposal) they may hold very different beliefs, expectations, feelings, and action orientations toward the matter at issue.

In 1962 Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachy (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) argued that ‘Man’s social actions – whether the actions involve religious behaviour, ways of earning a living, political activity, or buying and selling goods – are directed by his attitude.’ Attitude therefore is a state of readiness leading the individual to perceive things and people around him in certain ways (Halloran, 1967).

Attitudes, also, are not innate. They are learned, they develop and they are organised through experience. These states of readiness are relatively enduring but they are modifiable and subject to change (Halloran, 1967). Attitudes are dynamic. They are not merely latent states of preparedness awaiting the presentation of an appropriate object for their activation. They have motivational qualities and can lead a person to



seek (or avoid) the objects about which they are organised (Halloran, 1967).

### **2.3. ATTITUDE FORMATION**

According to Crow and Crow (1965) attitudes are developed moment by moment. Some of them are formed without direction; others are the result of careful planning by a person – or persons – who desires to encourage the development of certain attitudes in others. Adolescents are great imitators of attitudes. They learn many of their attitudes from their parents, their teachers, their other associates and the media.

Some of our attitudes are learned through *classical conditioning* by the pairing of something desirable or undesirable with the object of the attitude. If Burger-Lo tastes good, you will associate that experience with Burger-Lo and develop a positive attitude toward it (Sdorow, 1993).

Attitudes may also be formed through *operant conditioning*, as in an experiment conducted at the University of Hawaii (Sdorow, 1993). Undergraduates, contacted by telephone, were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with statements that favoured or opposed a proposed 'Springtime Aloha Week'. The caller positively reinforced certain statements by saying 'good'. For half of the telephone calls, the caller said 'good' whenever the student agreed with a statement favouring the proposal. For the other half, the caller said 'good' whenever the student agreed with a statement opposing the proposal. One week later the students were given a 'Local Issues Questionnaire'. Among the items in the questionnaire was a question asking whether they favoured or opposed the proposed Springtime Aloha Week. The responses to that question showed that students who earlier had been reinforced for making statements that favoured the Springtime Aloha Week were more likely to

favour it, while students who earlier had been reinforced for making statements that opposed it were more likely to oppose it.

According to *social-learning theory* (Sdorow, 1993), many of our attitudes are learned through observing others, particularly our parents, our peers, and characters on television shows, being punished or positively reinforced for expressing particular behaviours. Suppose that a child repeatedly observes his parents responding positively to his older brother for expressing certain political or religious attitudes. Because he would want to receive the same positive responses from his parents, he might adopt similar attitudes.

According to Garrison (1965) attitudes depend on situations around which we have constructed various habit patterns and built up various images and concepts. Physical and social contacts result in the establishment of conscious adjustments and reaction tendencies. The child born and reared in a social world is continually subject to ever-changing social stimuli; socially, he becomes what his environment makes him.

Mead (Garrison, 1965) points out that we learn who we are and the kind of person we are from the reaction of other people to us. This learning begins at an early stage, so that by puberty the individual has acquired notions about *self* and others like and different from himself. Attitudes and beliefs are 'soaked up' from the milieu in which the child develops. They are a result of all the physical and social stimulation he has encountered. As boys and girls mature, their attitudes and beliefs develop and change, a result of the influence of their families, community mores, religion, and peer pressure.

Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (Halloran, 1967) share a similar view. They see

attitudes developing in the process of need or want satisfaction and in relation to the individual's group affiliations and to the information to which he is exposed. This involves a socialization process. The principal agents in the socialization process are parents, siblings, relatives, friends, teachers and the media.

Halloran(1967) also believes that attitudes are learned. They develop as we develop, in interaction, in relationships with other people, particularly with significant others in the socialization process. He feels it is important to realise that the early years in the socialization process are highly significant and that group affiliations of an individual play an important role in the formation of his attitudes. Nevertheless, he believes that the individual need not take anything or everything from the groups to which he refers, or to which he affiliates.

Selectivity is at work and this selectivity obviously relates to the individual's needs and wants. He will choose from what is offered, according to his needs. The individuals will refer to many groups and this can result in conflict and cross-pressures. It will be seen then that the effect of group influence on the formation of attitudes is indirect and complex.

#### **2.4. ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS**

The attitude of an adolescent is shaped and influenced by his search for identity. However, according to Erikson (Sdorow, 1993) the most important task of the adolescent is to first resolve the crisis of *identity versus role confusion*. James Marcia (Shaffer,1996:483) classifies adolescents into one of four identity statuses:

1. Identity diffusion – Adolescents classified as “diffuse” have not yet thought

about identity issues or, having thought about them, have failed to make any firm commitment. This describes a confused personality (Jacobs, 1989).

2. Foreclosure – The young person's identity is determined by parents or peers. He does things because someone else says so, or because others do. He adopts a viewpoint without carefully evaluating its implications (Jacobs, 1989).
3. Moratorium – This status describes the person who is experiencing what Erik Erikson referred to as an identity crisis (Shaffer, 1996). He has made no definite commitments, but is actively exploring a number of values, interests and ideologies in search of a stable identity. Such a person is prepared to challenge authority, and may be less immediately co-operative (Jacobs, 1989).
4. Identity achievement – Identity achieved at this stage is not necessarily identity for life. Adult development refines identity, and experience may well bring about significant changes; but the person who has reached this point will be able to tolerate better the confusion which inevitably accompanies changes in adult identity. Decisions are made by considering alternatives. The irrational rebelliousness or the irrational need to conform have been left behind (Jacobs, 1989).

The adolescent develops a sense of identity by adopting his own set of values, attitudes and social behaviours, but this generally does not occur before the adolescent experiments with a variety of values and social behaviours – often to the displeasure of those in authority. Because the adolescent is dependent on adults while seeking an independent identity, adolescence has traditionally been considered a period of conflict between adults and children.

According to Sdorow (1993) positive relations with parents not only prevent conflicts within families, but also promote more satisfactory relations with peers. Positive relations between adolescents and their parents and peers are also associated with better intellectual development. Nonetheless, in extreme cases, adolescents may adopt negative identities that promote antisocial, or even delinquent, behaviours. This is common in adolescents whose parents set few rules, fail to discipline them, and fail to supervise their behaviour. This could also be the case in adolescents whose parents are authoritarian or autocratic and give their children no room for freedom of expression or movement. Delinquent acts may then be employed by adolescents to show their resentment to adult's authority either to show that they are grown up or as punishment to over-demanding adults.

Early adolescents is especially marked by the individual's incipient physical maturation and gradual attainment of adulthood. But not everyone develops at the same rate and great physical and psychological differences are sometimes evident during this phase. Thus adolescents who reach puberty early or late experience adaptation problems (Cronje, 1986). Those who develop unevenly and are, for example, physically mature but emotionally and intellectually retarded can experience especially big problems. Halleck (Cronje, 1986) says that girls whose physical development is rapid often became involved in sexual misconduct. Boys who are physically mature relatively early sometimes became involved in crime because their emotional immaturity may prevent them from realising the consequences of their deeds.

Adolescents whose physical maturation is slow can develop personality problems, e.g. feelings of inferiority, for which they try to compensate by misconduct and

delinquency (Cronje, 1986). They overcompensate for their delayed development by showing off and displaying other immature behaviour. The sense of responsibility is not strongly developed and the adolescent is for the most part selfish, hasty, restless, impatient and irresponsible (Cronje, 1986).

The emotionally immature adolescent is therefore an easy victim of the media.

However, the concept of media goes beyond television and movies. It includes rock music, music videos, advertising, video and computer games as well as computers and the internet. Print media in the form of books, magazines and newspapers as well as radio should also be included. Media influence knowledge, behaviour and value systems of adolescents (Szabo, 2003).

Psychologist, Lourens Schlebusch, of the medical psychology department of the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine, Durban, South Africa, believes that media exposure to violence were some of the factors contributing to criminal behaviour in young people (Premdev & Langry, 2002).

A University of Durban-Westville law school criminologist, Dr Vanitha Chetty, believes that pressure on children made it very difficult for some of them to cope. Dysfunctional, single parent homes, peer pressure and the drug and alcohol influence pressures children. Children see so much of violence that sometimes they start imitating what they see. Bad parenting is the major factor contributing to criminal behaviour in youth. Parents are afraid to discipline their children as they feel a sense of guilt, and often overindulge them, especially if both parents work. Also, if both parents work, there is sometimes inadequate parental supervision. Parents do not know what their children are doing while they are at work (Premdev & Langry, 2002).



Therefore the influence of media advertisements, peer pressure, deficient parent-child relationships, poor family and environmental factors, emotional disturbance, conflict and rebellion against parents, society and school, coupled with inexperience can cause maladjustment and deviant behaviour in the immature and emotionally disturbed adolescent (Cronje,1986).

## **2.5 MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDES**

### **2.5.1.The Census of Opinions**

According to Gordon Allport (Fishbein, 1967) the simplest method for determining how common an attitude may be in a certain population is by counting ballots or by tabulating answers to a questionnaire. Roughly, this method may be said to ‘measure’ the range and distribution of public opinion, although it does not, of course, determine the intensity of the opinion of any given individual upon the issue in question. This method could be useful in determining the range of attitudes that the subjects in the study have towards authority. However, because of the comprehensive nature of information required it will have to be coupled with other methods.

### **2.5.2. The *a priori* Scale**

Another method used to measure attitudes is the use of the *a priori* scale. The *a priori* scale is essentially a test devised on the basis of logical rather than empirical considerations. It is an economical method, widely used and easy to apply (Fishbein, 1967). There are various forms of the *a priori* scale, but they are all alike in that their scoring is arbitrary. Sometimes the author presents a series of questions, each of which may have, say, five alternative answers from which the subject must select one.

These alternative answers are conceived by the author to lie on a single continuum and to be equally spaced from the most favourable to the least favourable. To each item the author arbitrarily assigns a value of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, according to his opinion of its significance. Another variation allows the subject to place in rank order all the alternatives according to his preference; these rank orders are then treated as though they were equal intervals in the scale.

This study will make use of the *a priori* scale because of the ease with which this method could be used with subjects ranging in age and background and also because of its economical advantage. The results obtained will, however, be verified and supplemented by other methods.

### **2.5.3. The Psychophysical (Rational) Scale**

According to Allport (Fishbein, 1967) the most significant event in the history of the measurement of attitudes was the application of psychophysical methods by Thurstone. To apply psychophysical methods it is necessary first to conceive of an attitude as a 'degree of affect' for or against an object or a value with which the scale is concerned. If this assumption is granted, it becomes possible to study the degree of favour or disfavour which each subject in a population has toward certain objects or values.

The scoring values for all of these scales are determined by combining the efforts of many judges who have arranged all the statements included in each scale according to the *discriminable* differences. If judges, by and large, agree that two statements express about the same degree of favour or disfavour it is obviously unnecessary to keep both statements in the scale. If the statements are widely different it is possible



by comparing the judges' sorting of each statement in relation to all other statements to determine its position. The final, rational scale results when forty or fifty statements are secured whose distance from one another on a single continuum are known. This distance is essentially the discriminable difference between the statements as they appear to the standardizing group of judges (Fishbein, 1967).

The obvious cost and time factor that will be involved in designing a psychophysical (rational) scale eliminates it as an option to be used for this study.

#### **2.5.4. Open-ended questions**

Most of the above methods do not allow the individual to adequately express his attitude. The procedure where an individual is interviewed at length and asked to respond to 'open-ended questions gives him the opportunity to say what he really thinks, to qualify, to expand, to relate a given attitude to another. Interviewers record what is said insofar as possible in the speaker's own words, and when expression is brief or incomplete, ask probing questions designed to elicit further comment on the issue being investigated. The result is that a better, broader picture of an individual's attitude is obtained.

The advantage of using this method in the study is that a deeper understanding of adolescent attitude to authority will be developed. The causes of this attitude can also be explored in greater depth. The disadvantage of this method is that it is a time consuming exercise. It therefore requires a careful selection of a sample on which assumptions about adolescents can be made.

### **2.5.5. Projective techniques**

Strong and important attitudes may exist, and yet a person may be unable to verbalise them, or may not wish to verbalise them – or indeed, he may even deny to himself, or be quite unaware, that he possesses certain views. Therefore, methods of studying attitudes which do not depend on direct questioning can be very useful. Ingenious ways of ‘sneaking up’ on attitudes have been devised. In one particularly interesting and revealing investigation (Kuhlen, 1952), pictures of a teacher and some children in a school situation were shown to children, and they were asked to tell whether the teacher approved of the schoolwork of a particular child at whom she was looking. In one picture the child involved was white; in another picture (in all other respects identical) the child was a Negro. It is reasonable to expect that whether the teacher was considered to be approving or disapproving actually represented a projection of the child’s own attitude toward a Negro as contrasted to his attitude toward a white child (Kuhlen, 1952).

While this method might yield interesting results, the easy availability of commercial pictures depicting scenes with adolescents in the presence of authority makes it unsuitable for this study. Also, the researcher is not a trained expert in interpreting information from such a test or measure.

### **2.6. SUMMARY**

This chapter has addressed itself to the main purposes. It looked at the conception of attitude and its formation. It linked this with the adolescent characteristics and their attitudes to authority. Finally it outlined some methods for measuring attitude. It highlighted the particular ones suitable for measuring adolescents’ attitude to authority which the researcher intends to adopt and adapt in this study. The next

chapter presents a literature review on studies carried out locally and around the world on adolescent attitude to authority.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Media reports on youth crime and delinquency regularly paint a picture of undisciplined and dangerous young people with negative attitudes towards authority. But can a general attitude towards institutional authority be attributed to adolescents; that is, do they have a propensity to respond to different authorities in the same way? Attitudes towards authority by youth have been investigated in recent years in a number of Western countries. This chapter presents a review of related literature on the attitudes toward authority figures.

#### **3.2. ADOLESCENT ATTITUDE TO INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY**

The relationship between parents and young children is generally uncomplicated in terms of understanding the locus of authority. As the child enters adolescence, logical and abstract reasoning skills increase, and there is a greater tendency to question authority. There is also a developmental behavioural dimension, in which the adolescent tests the limits of new adolescent-adult roles (Levy, 2001).

At this time, emotional adaptation becomes necessary for both adolescents and their parents. During puberty, the young person begins to seek an adult identity, which involves gradually establishing emotional independence from parents. Parents may react with anger or feelings of rejection. Reciprocal feelings of rejection may also be experienced by the adolescent. Thus this is often a difficult period in the parent-adolescent relationship (Levy, 2001).

In a review of literature from 1929 to 2001, Levy (2001) noted that the reasons for

conflict between adolescents and parents remained much the same. According to Papini and Sebby (1988), common areas of conflict include school grades, time spent watching television, household chores and personal appearance. Smetana (1988) reported very high acceptance by both parents and adolescents that parents should make rules. Further, rules related to moral matters were seen as correct regardless of whether parents enforced the rules. In addition, obedience to parents was not seen as a response to parental authority per se, but rather was based on the degree of internal acceptance of rules by the adolescent (Levy, 2001).

In the last two decades, there have been a number of valuable studies in Australia that have measured young people's attitude towards institutional authority. Many of these studies have examined attitudes towards a number of significant sources (or potential sources) of authority for youth, such as police, the law, teachers, and the army. One of the earliest of these studies was conducted by Rigby and Rump (1979), who noted that each of the attitudes towards authority scales correlated positively and significantly with the others. A similar study of English adolescents' attitudes by Murray and Thompson (1985) showed that while a substantial number of adolescents were cynical regarding teachers or police, the majority viewed them positively. In a study of Australian adolescents Rigby, Schofield and Slee (1987) also found that there is a positive generalised attitude towards institutional authority among adolescents. However, one recent study by Rigby and Black (1993) with Australian Aboriginal preadolescents indicated significantly less positive attitudes towards parents and police.

Within this general trend of relatively positive attitudes, some American studies have indicated that attitudes towards authority become more unfavourable with age,

specifically during high school (Levy, 2001). Similar results were found with an Australian sample of young adolescents, but only in regard to attitudes towards parents and teachers, not the law and police (Levy, 2001). Other studies have reported that, by the mid-teenage years, there seems to be a stabilisation; there is no trend towards greater hostility to authority with increasing age (Levy, 2001).

It is important to consider the above findings specifically in relation to delinquency. Style of parental authority may be of particular relevance in cases where the adolescent with too much liberty seems to be prone to poorer school performance and more behavioural maladjustment. Wilson in 1980 suggested that lax parental supervision, wherein standards of behaviour are not defined or enforced, is the factor most likely to lead to delinquency.

### **3.3. PARENTING STYLES AND CONCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY**

Research on parenting during adolescence has focused primarily on the effects of parenting styles on adolescent development (Smetana, 1995). According to Baumrind's (1991) widely used typology, parenting styles, can be seen as varying along two orthogonal dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness. When crossed, these two dimensions yield four parenting styles: *authoritative* parents, who are both responsive and demanding, *authoritarian* parents, who are demanding but not responsive, *permissive* parents, who are responsive but not demanding, and more recently, *rejecting-neglecting* parents, who are disengaged and neither demanding nor responsive. Authoritative parenting has been associated consistently with a wide range of positive adolescent outcomes, including better academic performance, increased competence, autonomy, and self-esteem, less deviance, and a more well-

rounded peer group orientation, particularly among white, middle-class samples (Smetana, 1995).

In contrast, recent research (Smetana, 1995) using a domain specificity model of social-cognition development, suggests that adolescents' and parents' conceptions of parental authority differ according to the conceptual domain of the issue under consideration. According to the domain-specificity model guiding Smetana's (1995) research, moral issues (defined as acts that are prescriptively wrong because they affect the rights or welfare of others), are conceptually distinct from conventional issues (defined as arbitrary and consensually agreed upon behavioural uniformities that structure social interactions in different social systems). In turn, moral and conventional issues have been distinguished from both personal issues (defined as acts that have consequences only to the actor and therefore viewed as beyond societal regulation and moral concern) and prudential issues (defined as pertaining to safety, harm to the self, comfort and health). Adolescents and parents agreed that parents should retain authority to regulate moral, conventional, and prudential issues. With increasing age, however, adolescents questioned parents' legitimate authority to regulate personal, multifaceted, and friendship issues (Smetana, 1995).

### **3.4. AUTHORITY AND FRIENDSHIP ISSUES**

Adult-child relations and peer associations are considered the primary social systems during childhood and adolescence. Drug usage, which is an important social problem facing adolescents, has potential ramifications for adult-child relationships as well as the relationship between peers. The research by Tisak, Tisak and Rogers (1994) was designed to investigate adolescents' reasoning about authority and friendship issues.



The primary goal was to examine adolescents' reasoning about parent-initiated rules which inhibit or retrain adolescent behaviours. Included were adolescents' reasoning about the legitimacy of authorities (i.e. the parents) to prohibit a friendship because of the friend's involvement with drugs (Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994).

The subjects were 41 younger adolescents from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (20 males and 21 females) and 41 older adolescents from the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (21 males and 20 females) located in the Midwestern United States. The subjects were predominantly White and came from mixed socio-economic backgrounds (working, middle and upper-middle class).

Subjects were asked whether it would be legitimate for parents to prohibit a friendship when parents failed to provide a reason for the rule, and whether peers have an obligation to obey the rule once it was formalised. When parents failed to provide a reason for the rule, all subjects indicated that the rule was not legitimate and peers did not have an obligation to obey the rule. In addition all subjects supported their judgement by stating that it should be up to the individual to decide on his/her friends (Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994).

When subjects were asked whether it would be legitimate for parents to prohibit a friendship and whether peers have an obligation to obey the rule because a friend uses drugs, the results indicated a significant agreement for the legitimacy of rule making by authority (Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994).

When parents justified the rule based on a friend's marijuana use, most adolescents indicated that the rule would be legitimate and peers would have to comply with the rule. Significantly fewer adolescents indicated that the rule would be legitimate and



that peers would have to comply when parents referred to the friend's alcohol use or their cigarette use. Significantly more adolescents also judged that it would be all right for parents to prohibit the friendship and peers would have to comply with the rule because a friend drinks beer in comparison to a friend smoking cigarettes (Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994).

The results also showed that it was predominantly the younger adolescents in comparison to their older counterparts, who judged that the rules would be legitimate and that peers would have an obligation to comply with the rules. In justifying why a rule prohibiting a friendship would be legitimate and why a son or daughter would have to obey the rule, adolescents primarily referred to the welfare of the son or daughter. Subjects indicated that parents need to protect their children from negative consequences that could result from associating with a friend who is involved in drugs. Adolescents also stated that the person might model the friend's negative behaviour. Adolescents who indicated that the rule would not be legitimate and that peers would not have to comply with the rule justified their responses by stating that the friend's behaviour would not affect the individual and that it's up to the individual to choose his/her friends (Tisak, Tisak & Rogers, 1994).

### **3.5 ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUTHORITY OF ADOLESCENTS UNDER FAMILY SUPERVISION**

In Netherlands, if parents abuse their power, they may be deprived of their formal sovereignty by the intervention of the juvenile court (Nijnatten, 1997). In such an event, placement under family guidance is by far the most common measure. Parents are not deprived of their rights in such circumstances but are assigned a family supervisor, typically a social worker from an agency for family guidance. The family

supervisor's authority is not a transferred parental authority, but a corporate competence delegated to the family supervision agency, a kind of public authority. It is a specific assignment that is dictated by the juvenile judge in each case. Parental tasks are not delegated voluntarily, but are taken over compulsorily. Because both parents and children may feel blamed by the fact that parental authority is restricted against the will of the parents, their attitudes toward the supervisor may be influenced in a negative way (Nijnatten, 1997).

Nijnatten's (1997) study focuses on the ways adolescents view authority when they are confronted with a child protection measure. Do adolescents under family supervision regard parental authority differently from professional authority? How do they feel about the authority of the juvenile judge and the family supervisor?

Nijnatten (1997) used as the sample, thirty-six adolescents under family guidance who had been recruited from a family guidance agency in a region with a middle-sized town. The mean age of the adolescents was 15.5 years. Thirteen girls and twenty-three boys participated. Twenty-five of the youths were of indigenous Dutch descent and eleven had foreign backgrounds (ethnic minorities). The adolescents lived in a variety of circumstances : fourteen were with their parent(s) at home, six in foster families, seven lived on their own, and nine lived in a children's home. Most of the adolescents came from families with only one parent. Twenty of the thirty six adolescents had been confronted with parental divorce, seven of the parents had died, three of the youths had a single mother, and only six had both their parents.

The results of Nijnatten's study (1997) showed that adolescents under family guidance (either single or both parents) do not subscribe to a negative view of authority. Most of them see authority as a necessary condition for education. Half concede its hierarchical character and

accept that authorities are dominant. More than a third of the ethnic minority as opposed to only 8% of those of indigenous Dutch heritage see their parents as strict. The majority of both girls and boys consider their parents' style as liberal. A profitable outcome or reward is the major motivator for adolescents to obey their family supervisor. The supervisors' "expertise" is also a reason for obeying them. In contrast, obedience to the parents is most often motivated by the legitimacy of parental authority. In spite of the legal procedures of juvenile court, supervised adolescents rarely mention the legitimacy of the family supervisor's authority as a reason to obey him or her. More often, they ascribe their obedience to the expertise of the supervisor or to the rewards the supervisors control.

How do these adolescents consider the authority of the judge, as compared with the family supervisor? They were asked whether these authorities should be enabled to take action in the interests of the adolescents against their will. The results show that 58% of the interviewed adolescents think that judges should be able to use their power, no matter what the decision is about, whereas only 33% think the family supervisor should have a comparable position of power. Two thirds of the adolescents said that they would raise their children in a moderate way, similar to an authoritative style. They said they would listen to their children if they did not agree with parental decisions and would try to explain their views. They would negotiate as much as possible. They alleged that if you forbid too much, children become sneaky, but also suggested that children have to know boundaries, because otherwise the situation becomes chaotic.

### **3.6 SOUTH AFRICAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPLANATIONS FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

Juvenile offending is a pervasive social problem. A number of studies (Tyson, 2002)

indicate that juveniles, like adults, use multiple explanations of offending behaviour and that the explanations endorsed are similar to those of adults. For instance, Tyson and Hubert( Tyson, 2002) found six factors underlying the explanations of 3171 adolescents in Australia. These factors were labelled home environment, emotional adjustment, social control, impulsivity, innate and social alienation. Although there appears to be broad agreement on the underlying causes of crime, the degree of endorsement of the different explanations varies as a function of variables such as age, gender, political affiliations, location of residence, culture and knowing someone who has been in trouble with the police.

Tyson undertook a similar study in South Africa. The sample consisted of 554 grade 8 to 12 learners whose ages ranged from 13 to 19 from two Government High Schools in the Eastern Cape.

The results of the study show an overlap with the Australian results. Four of the factors were almost identical. They were home environment, emotional adjustment, social control and social alienation. The only major difference in the factor structure was the emergence of the deprivation factor which was not present in the Australian data. The existence of this dimension in the South African data is not surprising given the gross economic and social disparities that exist in South African society. In both South Africa and Australia, the impact of peers is clearly seen to be a major influence on delinquent behaviour.

### **3.7. SUMMARY**

The literature has revealed differences in attitudes to authority on the basis of age, on the basis of parental styles and type of family and on the basis of different authority

figures. Attitudes to parental authority is different from that to family supervisor and also different from attitude to law, police or judge. There is scanty South African literature on attitude of adolescents to authority. It will therefore be interesting to find out if children in South Africa reflect similar attitudes to authority as do those in other countries. The next chapter will discuss the methodology that will be undertaken to conduct a similar study in a South African context.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Schnetler (1989) man is constantly striving for a better understanding of the reality in which he finds himself. One of the most important ways of expressing reality is by means of assumptions. Assumptions are personal interpretations of the available information relating to the reality in which one finds oneself. “Personal Interpretations” indicate the subjective selection of information on reality, according to a person’s frame of reference, and represent his value system and the basis for his assumptions.

It is obvious from the above that such assumptions or statements are not based on scientific considerations such as reliability, accuracy, credibility and objectivity. Survey research is therefore necessary to ensure that conclusions about the aspect of reality under investigation have a logical, empirical and objective base. A survey is an empirical and logical study involving the systematic and impartial collection of data from a sample of cases as well as the statistical analysis of the findings (Frey, 1970).

In the previous chapter the literature review for the research study was presented. The literature review captured the attitudes of adolescents in different countries in the way they react to authority. The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the methodology adopted for a study in South Africa and how data was collected and used to test out the assumptions about adolescent attitude to authority in the sample chosen.

The chapter describes the various tools for data collection that were used in this

study. It argues a case for the use of both the quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. It also proceeds to give a detailed description of the sample used in the study.

#### **4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

While there are several paradigms of research, the two that the researcher found most suitable were the quantitative and the qualitative research designs. In the quantitative design the instrument used for data collection (the questionnaire) made it possible to quantify the data, or collect the data in quantity. The qualitative research designs (interview and observation) helped to present data in descriptive qualitative terms.

Because of the nature of information needed for the study there was a need to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Attitude, being elusive and/or varies depending on situations and circumstances, needed to be studied in different situations. The researcher needed to collect information on attitude not just from the point of view of the subjects, but through observation and interview. There was therefore the need for not only objective measures (as done with the questionnaire) but also subjective measures as was obtained through observation and the interview which allowed the researcher to interact with subjects and obtain pertinent information.

#### **4.3. POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

Boys' Town, Tongaat is a children's home providing residential child-care programme for boys 13-16 years of age. The residential programme provides care and treatment for boys who range from the under-privileged and neglected to the problematic.



The essence of the programme is self-realisation through responsibility, adequate professional assistance ( both therapeutic and educational) and a caring atmosphere. At Boys' Town the boys are significantly involved in decision-making concerning their own affairs. They govern themselves under the guidance of adults. The adults do not apply discipline – this is done by the boys who make their own rules and see that they are kept.

The boys have been referred to Boys' Town by family, clergymen, doctors, psychologists and social work agencies. In each case, the boys were placed at Boys' Town after an investigation of the problem by a social worker. The boys had a choice of whether they wanted to be placed at Boys' Town or remain at their residence. On average each boy stays for two to three years.

The boys go home to their families for weekends and holidays. The boys with no families are placed with host families over weekends and holidays. The boys also have contact with families, relatives and friends either by telephone, visits or by post. During the past year several outings were arranged for the boys. They included visits to charity fairs, cinema, educational tours, beach outings, visits to malls and shopping centres and visits to parks.

In the past year the adolescents in Boys' Town, Tongaat, have been disciplined for smoking cigarettes and drugs, stealing, fighting, swearing and absconding. The consequences for the misbehaviour have been either withdrawal of privileges or referral to the South African Police for illegal activities. This decision was taken after the boys were taken through disciplinary court session in consultation with the staff. Some youth find it difficult to accept the consequences for their anti-social behaviour despite ongoing counselling by staff and peers. Boys who are out of control are



referred for further intensive counselling to either of the principals. According to the principal, Mr Morar, the discipline at Boys' Town in most cases has been very effective. Well behaved youth were rewarded when they attained their single rooms and leadership status.

The boys have also been given the opportunity to attend workshops organised especially for them. Some of the topics covered were self-awareness, social skills, anger control, life skills, self-esteem, independent living skills, crafts, quit smoking, first aid, career guidance, study methods and street law. Boys were regularly counselled on how to deal with adversity and failure and how to develop a positive attitude to life in general and schoolwork in particular. Career counselling helped boys to see where they had strengths and this helped them to make realistic career choices.

The boys have also been actively involved in sport. They participate in soccer, athletics, volleyball, cricket, pool and tennis.

It is also now mandatory for parents of the boys to participate and complete the Boys' Town Common-sense Parenting Programme. This is a parenting skills programme to empower parents to be able to manage their children more effectively.

#### **4.4.RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

##### **4.4.1. THE USE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

According to Schnetler (1989) a well-designed questionnaire is the culmination of a long process of planning the research objective, formulating the problem, generating a hypothesis, etcetera. A questionnaire is not simply thrown together. A poorly designed questionnaire can invalidate any research results, notwithstanding the merits

of the sample, the field workers and the statistical techniques.

It stands to reason therefore that questionnaire design does not take place in a vacuum (Schnetler, 1989). The length of individual questions, the number of response options, as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by:

- the choice of the subject to be researched
- the aim of the research
- the size of the sample
- the choice of the method of data collection and
- the analysis of the data

Against this background the researcher can now look at the principles that determine whether or not a questionnaire is well-designed. In order to do this, it is necessary to briefly look at question content, question format, question order, question type, question formulation and question validity.

#### **4.4.1.1. Question content**

With regard to content, questions should vary according to the type of information required (Backstrom & Hursh-Cesar, 1981).

The questionnaire in this study used factual questions to obtain socio-demographic and personal information from respondents. Although the emphasis is on accuracy, a factual question does not always guarantee a factual answer. Schnetler (1989) believes that such questions should therefore be restricted to those best able to furnish factually correct answers, example:

*Place an X in the appropriate block*

Age

1. 13yr	2. 14 yrs	3. 15yrs	4. 16yrs	5. > 16yrs
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Information questions are designed to discover what respondents know about certain events, how much they know about them and the source of the information.

According to Schnetler (1989) knowledge of a particular circumstance is related to particular attitudes, example:

*Place an X in the block that you consider to be the reason for your placement in this institution.*

1. Abused	3. Neglected	5. Uncontrollable	7. Bad behaviour
2. Truanting	4. Living in detrimental circumstances	6. Destitute	8. Other (specify)

Questions regarding attitudes and opinions are more vulnerable to changes in wording, emphasis and sequence than questions dealing with facts (Kidder, 1981). They probe the feelings, convictions, ideas, presumptions and values related to the subject being researched. Questions regarding opinions attempt to establish the feelings and thoughts of respondents at a specific time on a specific subject matter, while questions regarding attitudes attempt to determine the integrated attitude-system underlying a particular opinion.

The following is an attitude question used in the study. The respondent was asked to indicate : strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree or strongly agree to the statement :

*As I was growing up my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it.*

#### **4.4.1.2. Question format**

Two basic question formats are used in survey research, namely the open questions (unstructured questions) or the closed questions (structured questions).

In an open question the respondent is encouraged to formulate and express his response freely, since this form of question does not contain any fixed response categories. Such questions are typically used to obtain reasons for particular opinions or attitudes adopted by a respondent. This was the method adopted in the interview with five respondents at Boys' Town, Tongaat. They were asked questions like:

*What is your general opinion of the various parenting styles?*

*What is your motivation for obedience to authority?*

In a structured questionnaire the questions contain specific, mutually exclusive categories of responses, from which the respondent selects the one category that best suits his response. The advantage of structured questionnaires is that they are easy to administer since they are coded beforehand. Data processing and analysis are also facilitated by prior coding. They are also more economical and less time-consuming to administer. In this study the questionnaire was administered to thirty-eight adolescents.

The disadvantage of this format is that it can lead to a loss of rapport and to frustration when respondents feel that the response options do not accommodate their personal opinions. They are thus forced to make artificial choices which they would not make in reality.

#### **4.4.1.3. Question type**

The structured questionnaire allows for a variety of question types, for example: the

dichotomous question, the multiple-choice question, the fill-in question, the filtering and follow-up question, the rank order question and the scaled questions (Schnetler, 1989). This study has used the multiple-choice questions and the scaled questions in the construction of the questionnaire.

The multiple-choice question makes provision for three or more response categories. The advantage of such a question is that more alternatives allow for finer distinctions between viewpoints. It is used to obtain information which can logically be grouped into reasonably fixed categories. Multiple-choice questions force the respondent to make a choice. It must therefore cover the whole range of possible responses (Schnetler, 1989).

Scales are often used to measure abstract concepts or attitudes. Because of the abstract nature of these, direct observation cannot take place and a construct such as attitude should be measured indirectly. The scales that are generally used are the Likert, Thurstone, Guttman and Semantic Differential. In this study the researcher chose to use the Likert scale.

The Likert scale involves the respondent choosing between a number of categories of response, giving an indication of the degree of agreement or disagreement with the attitude being measured. The categories have allotted scores (numerical values) and the respondent's attitude is measured by the total score, which is the sum of the scores of the categories that he selects for each item. In the questionnaire the scores on each subscale range from 10 to 50 ( 10 being for strongly disagree and 50 being for agree).

Scaled questions are designed for the respondent to record his answer by marking a particular point on the scale, example:

*As I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home the children 1 2 3 4 5  
should have their way in the family as often as the parents do*

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = neither agree or disagree
- 4 = agree
- 5 = strongly agree

The length of the scale will vary on the nature of the information being collected and the details required. The questionnaire used in this study has three sub-scales. The questions for mother and father are identical. Each has fifteen questions. Items 1, 4, 8, 11 and 14 indicate that adolescents view their mothers/fathers as permissive. Items 2, 5, 7, 9 and 12 indicate that adolescents view their mothers/fathers as authoritarian. Items 3, 6, 10, 13 and 15 indicate that adolescents view their mothers/fathers as authoritative/ flexible. The questions are based on Dr John R. Buri's *Parental Authority Questionnaire* (Buri, 1991)

According to Schnetler (1989) the following considerations should be taken into account in the compilation of a Likert scale:

- Statements should be in the singular, contain one idea only and no double
- negatives or any words unfamiliar to the respondent should be used
- Each statement should elicit responses at both the positive and negative extremes of the response continuum
- The statements should be relevant to the attitude construct that is being measured

#### **4.4.1.4. Question formulation**

The manner in which questions are formulated can often lead to systematic bias,

incidental errors or both (Moser & Kalton, 1979). A common error is that of asking a general question when a specific answer on a certain subject is required. For example: if the researcher is interested in the respondent's attitude toward his mother, the question "Can you talk to your mother?" is inadequate. It is too general and fails to activate the necessary specific experiential framework of the respondent. The respondent might be able to talk to his mother but it does not tell the researcher anything about his attitude toward her.

In formulating questions the language proficiency of the test group was taken into account. The respondents in this study are all adolescents – many of whom speak and understand English as a second language. The choice of pitch therefore had to be determined by the aim to communicate with respondents in language that they understand. Technical terms and jargon were avoided (Schnetler, 1989).

#### **4.4.1.5. Pilot Study**

After the draft questionnaire has been constructed, it is of the utmost importance to test it (Benson, 1986). In the first step in the refinement of the questionnaire the draft was subjected to the criticism of the two psychologists and two intern psychologists at The Browns' School, in Pinetown. It was also given to a principal and a teacher in the Newlands area in Durban. They were asked to determine the extent to which the questionnaire conformed with the principles of question and questionnaire construction, as well as whether or not the questions or statements on the questionnaire can actually elicit the type of information needed for the research study.

The revised questionnaire was then administered to a small test sample representing the test group. The test sample was a group of twelve adolescents from the Newlands



area in Durban. They all attend a Friday night life-skills programme run by the Shri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Newlands West Education Wing. The Sathya Sai schools' curriculum prioritise values such as politeness, discipline and respect, and provides a strong foundation for building good moral character. The children in the sample group came from a variety of social, educational, economic and moral backgrounds and are adjudged as capable of reflecting the views or offer responses representative of the target population.

This pre-testing afforded the researcher the opportunity to:

- determine the time taken for administering the questionnaire
- obtain feedback from respondents regarding any problems associated with the questionnaire
- discover problems related to the questionnaire and any of the questions which can arise during the interview.

#### **4.4.2. OBSERVATION**

In the strict sense, observation implies the use of eyes rather than the ears and the voice. In social science, the term is often used in a much wider sense. The participant observer shares in the life and activities of the community, observing – in the strict sense – what is going on around him but supplementing this by conversations, interviews and studies of records. The distinguishing feature of observation in the extended sense is that the information required is obtained directly, rather than through the reports of others; in the case of behaviour one finds out what the individual does, rather than what he says he does ( Moser & Kalton, 1977).

Although observation as a method has some important merits, there are also



limitations. There are, for instance, circumstances in which observation offers little help. A researcher interested in events or activities that belong to the past will have to rely on documents or more probably on what people tell him, although he knows that the latter information will be subject to memory errors. In addition, observation is rarely the most appropriate method for studying opinions and attitudes. Also difficulties are often encountered in obtaining a representative sample for the observation of behaviour. If the characteristics of a population are to be inferred from those of a sample, the sample should ideally be randomly selected (Moser & Kalton, 1977).

In this study the researcher had to rely on general observation of the subjects and their interaction with the authority figures at Boys' Town, Tongaat.

#### **4.4.3. THE USE OF DOCUMENTARY SOURCES**

It is usually possible to answer some of the questions a questionnaire is intended to cover from available data. However the answers could provide a check on the accuracy of the survey (Moser & Kalton, 1977). A mass of information is already available on the sample group. This was obtainable from the records kept at Boys' Town, Tongaat.

#### **4.4.4. THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

The semi-structured interview in this study is based on Merton's focused interview (Bailey, 1982). The focused interview uses topics and hypotheses selected in advance. The actual questions, however, are not specified in advance.

A crucial element in the focused interview is the structure provided by interviewing

people all of whom experienced a particular event such as coming to Boys' Town. The interviewer studies the event itself in advance, decides which aspects of it to probe, and constructs hypotheses. Thus even though question wording is not fixed in advance, question content is (Bailey, 1982).

Without the structure provided by these topics and hypotheses, the interviewer might not know which questions to ask and the interview could degenerate into a worthless exercise in which questions are asked at random and neither the interviewer nor the respondent knows what the interview is supposed to achieve (Bailey, 1982).

#### **4.5.ADMINISTERING OF INSTRUMENT**

On the afternoon of 23 May 2003 the questionnaire was administered to 38 adolescents at Boys' Town, Tongaat. Although the 46 adolescents currently registered at the residential home all agreed verbally to take part in the study, 8 of them were not available due to academic commitments.

The administration was carried out in the dining-hall at Boys' Town, Tongaat. Each adolescent was given a questionnaire and a pen. The administration took twice the time allocated. This was because the boys were easily distracted. They asked attention-seeking questions like: Can I keep the pen? , When are you coming again? Do you have children?

They also required clarity on virtually every question. This could also have been attention-seeking as all of them speak English and attend English-medium schools. The researcher however, had to read aloud the questionnaire (at the request of some) one question at a time. This caused some of them to become restless and impatient to complete the questionnaire.

The semi-structured interview took place on the afternoon of 30 May 2003. Five adolescents participated. All five had been at Boys' Town, Tongaat for more than a year. There was one Indian, one coloured, one white and two black boys.

The core of the interviewer's task was to locate the sample members, to obtain the interviews and to ask the questions and record the answers (Sudman, 1966). The aim of the researcher's introductory procedures was to increase the respondents' motivation to co-operate. The researcher began the interview by stating who she was and the purpose for the survey.

#### **4.6.DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher is not very computer literate. After capturing the data from the questionnaires, she enlisted the assistance of an IT specialist from the University of Natal to present the results in tabular form.

The semi-structured interview was audio-taped. The transcript was analysed for common attitudes and major themes.

#### **4.7. SUMMARY**

This chapter has explained the research methodology that was used in the study. It also dealt with the considerations and requirements that were borne in mind when constructing the items for the questionnaire and the questionnaire itself. The next chapter will present the results, data analysis and interpretation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

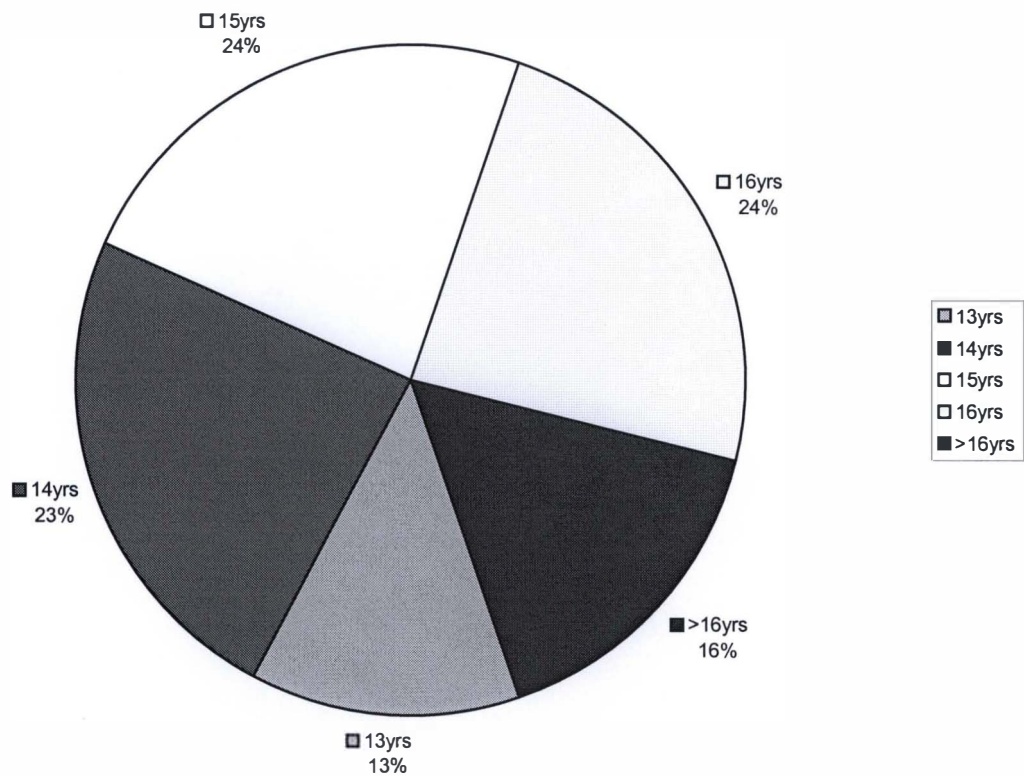
In the previous chapter methodology used to collect data in this study was examined.

In this chapter data that was collected through interviews and questionnaires are presented and analysed. The main issue that this study is trying to look at is the attitude of adolescents towards authority. The discussion thus commences with the presentation and analysis of results from the questionnaires. The chapter then proceeds to present the responses of the adolescents during the interview.

#### **5.2. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

##### **5.2.1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS**

All thirty-eight adolescents who were present at Boys' Town, Tongaat on the 23 May 2003 completed the questionnaire. Their ages ranged as follows:

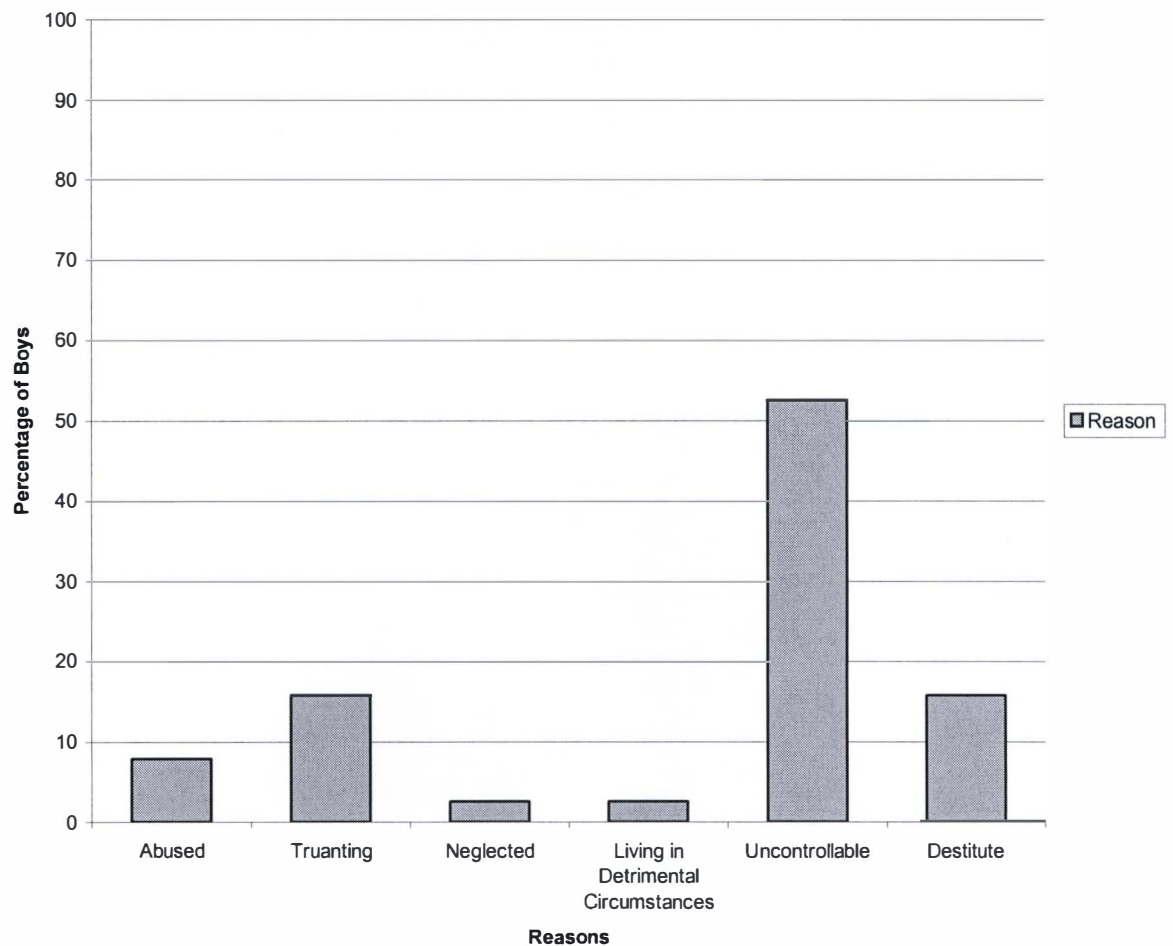


**FIGURE 1: AGE OF RESPONDENTS**

Five of the thirty-eight boys (13%) were thirteen years old. Twenty-seven of the adolescents (71%) fell in the 14 – 16 years old range and six of them (16%) were older than sixteen.

The reason for the adolescents being placed at Boys' Town, Tongaat ranged from being destitute, neglected, abused and living in detrimental circumstances to truanting and being uncontrollable. Being uncontrollable makes up more than 50% of the sample population. This points to a lack of respect and fear for authority figures. They had openly defied authority both at home and in the school situation.

If this figure is combined with the adolescents that had truanted, it totals more than seventy percent of the adolescents at Boys' Town, Tongaat. This is an alarming figure if a negative attitude to authority is correlated with a high drop-out rate from school.



**FIGURE 2: REASONS FOR PLACEMENT IN BOY'S TOWN**

The adolescents come from homes with the following average household income:

Under R1 000	- 14 adolescents
R1001 - R3 000	- 13 adolescents
R3 001 - R5 000	- 3 adolescents
R5 001 – R10 000	- 4 adolescents

More than R10 000 - 4 adolescents

The other results of the research conducted at Boys' Town, Tongaat are presented according to the critical questions. They are:

- what is the attitude of adolescents in Boys' Town, Tongaat, to authority?
- Is there a difference in attitude to authority amongst boys of different grades?
- Is there a difference in attitude to authority amongst Indian, white, coloured and black boys?
- Does the parental academic background affect the attitude of boys to authority?
- Does the type of family structure the adolescent boy come from influence his attitude to authority?

## **5.2.2. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

### **5.2.2.1. ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS IN BOYS' TOWN , TONGAAT, TO AUTHORITY FIGURE**

The questionnaire included fifteen statements to assess the attitude of the adolescents to *mother* and fifteen statements to assess the attitude of the adolescents to *father*.

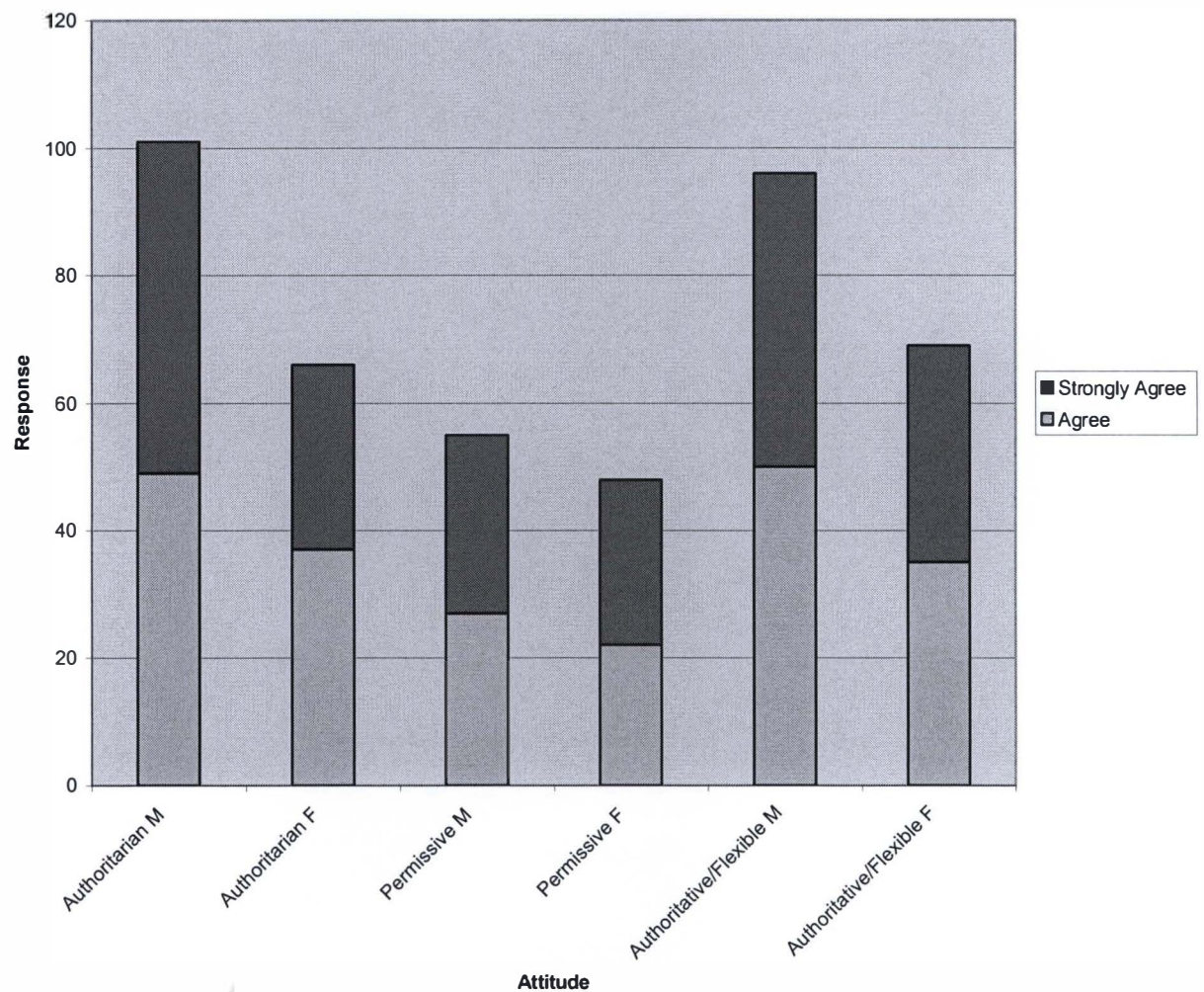
Each set of fifteen statements was further divided into three sections according to the parenting styles, namely authoritarian attitude, permissive attitude and authoritative/flexible attitude.

The adolescents responded to each statement in one of the following ways:

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neither agree nor disagree
- agree
- strongly agree



Only the *agree* and *strongly agree* responses to each statement are considered in this presentation.



**FIGURE 3: ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS IN BOYS' TOWN, TONGAAT, TO AUTHORITY**

Out of a possible total of 570 responses (15 statements multiplied by thirty-eight adolescents) there were 101 responses that felt *mother* was authoritarian, 96 responses that felt *mother* was authoritative/flexible and 55 responses that felt *mother* was permissive. 105 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.



In contrast 69 responses were for *father* being authoritative/flexible, 66 responses for *father* being authoritarian and 48 responses for *father* being permissive. 215 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

#### 5.2.2.2. ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY BY ADOLESCENTS OF DIFFERENT GRADES

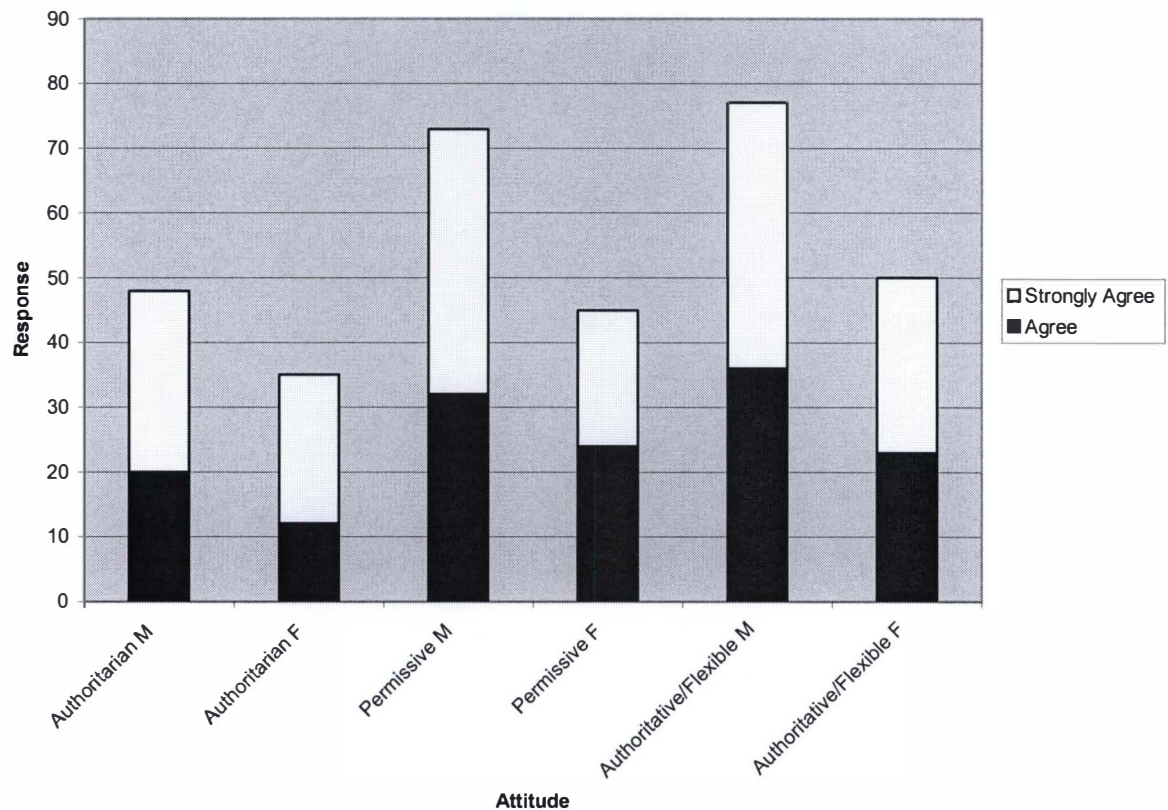
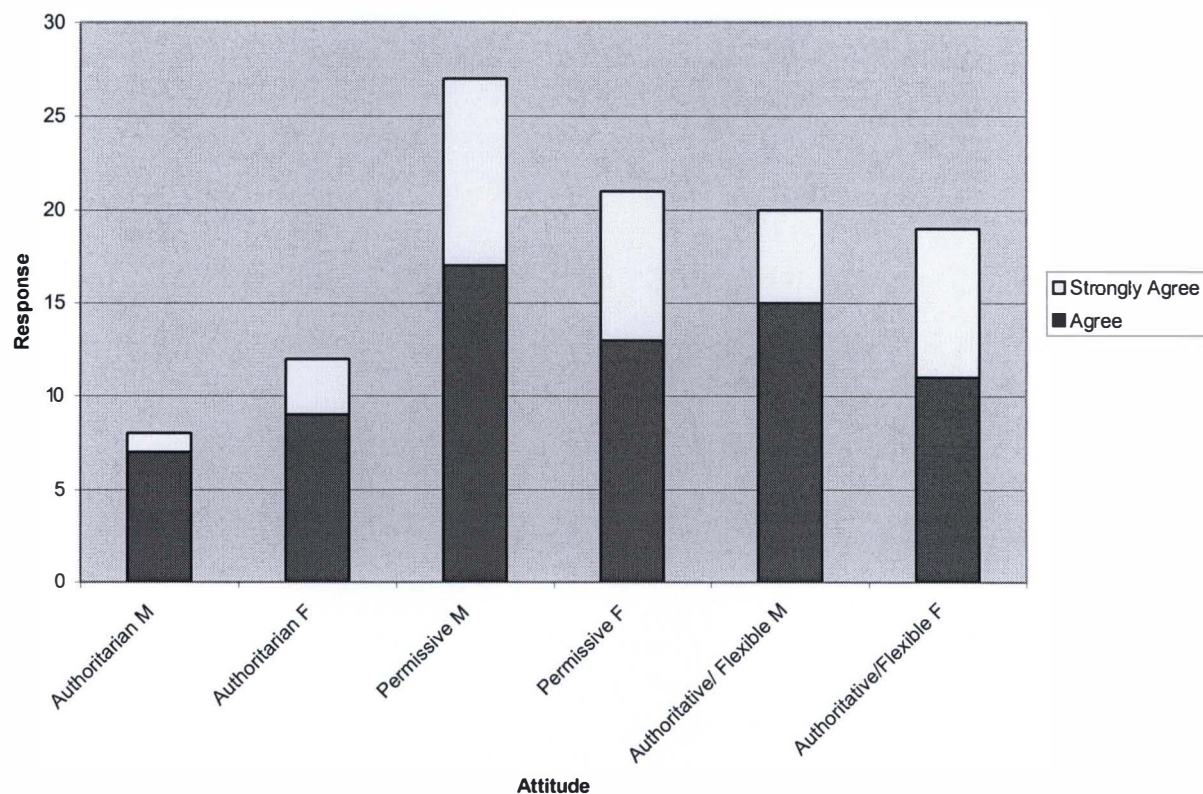


FIGURE 4: ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY OF ADOLESCENTS IN GRADES 6 TO 9

Out of a possible total of 450 responses (30 respondents multiplied by 15 items) 77 responses were for *mother* being authoritative/flexible, 73 responses were for *mother* being permissive and 48 responses were for *mother* being authoritarian. 89 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

In reflecting their attitude to *father*, out of a possible total of 450 responses, 50 were

for *father* being authoritative/flexible, 45 were for *father* being permissive and 35 were for *father* being authoritarian. 191 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.



**FIGURE 5: ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY OF ADOLESCENTS IN GRADES 10 TO 12**

There were 8 adolescents who fell in this category. Out of a possible 120 responses, there were 27 responses in favour of *mother* being permissive, 20 responses in favour of *mother* being authoritative/ flexible and 8 responses in favour of *mother* being authoritarian. 14 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

In response to attitude to *father*, 21 responses were in favour of *father* being permissive, 19 were in favour of *father* being authoritative/ flexible and 12 were in favour of *father* being authoritarian. 24 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

Table 1 and 2 below summarises the responses.

**Table 1: Respondents by grade level of school and the number of possible responses**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>No. of Possible Responses</b>
Grade 6-9	30	450
Grade 10-12	8	120

**Table 2: Attitude of adolescents by grade level and authority styles**

<b>Authority Figure</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Authority Style</b>		
		<b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Permissive</b>	<b>Authoritative/Flexible</b>
Mother	Grade 6-9	48 (11%)	73 (16%)	<b>77 (17%)</b>
	Grade 10-12	8 (7%)	<b>27 (23%)</b>	20 (17%)
Father	Grade 6-9	35 (8%)	45 (10%)	<b>50 (11%)</b>
	Grade 10-12	12 (1%)	<b>21 (18%)</b>	19 (16%)

Adolescents in grades 6 – 9 described both mother and father as authoritative/flexible more times than as permissive or authoritarian. However this only accounted for 17% and 11% respectively of the total possible responses.

Adolescents in grades 10 – 12 on the other hand chose permissive over authoritarian and authoritative/flexible to describe mother and father. This however accounted for only 23% and 18% respectively of the total possible responses.



### 5.2.2.3. ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY BY ADOLESCENTS FROM DIFFERENT RACES

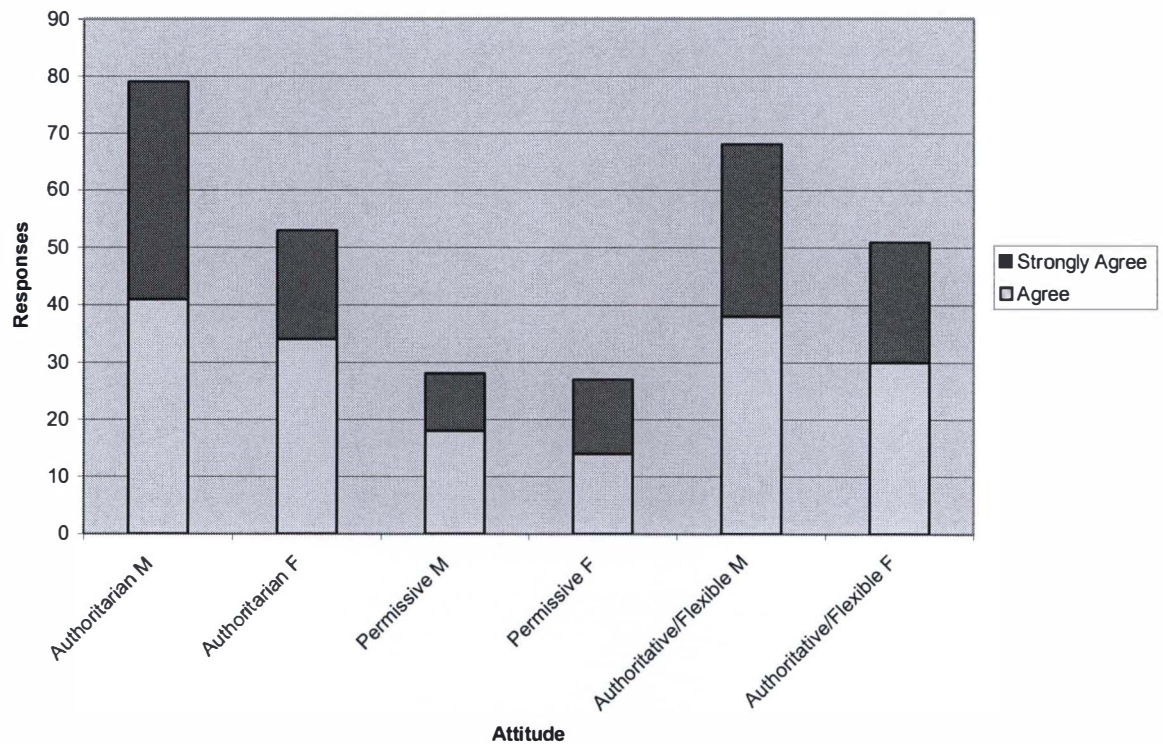
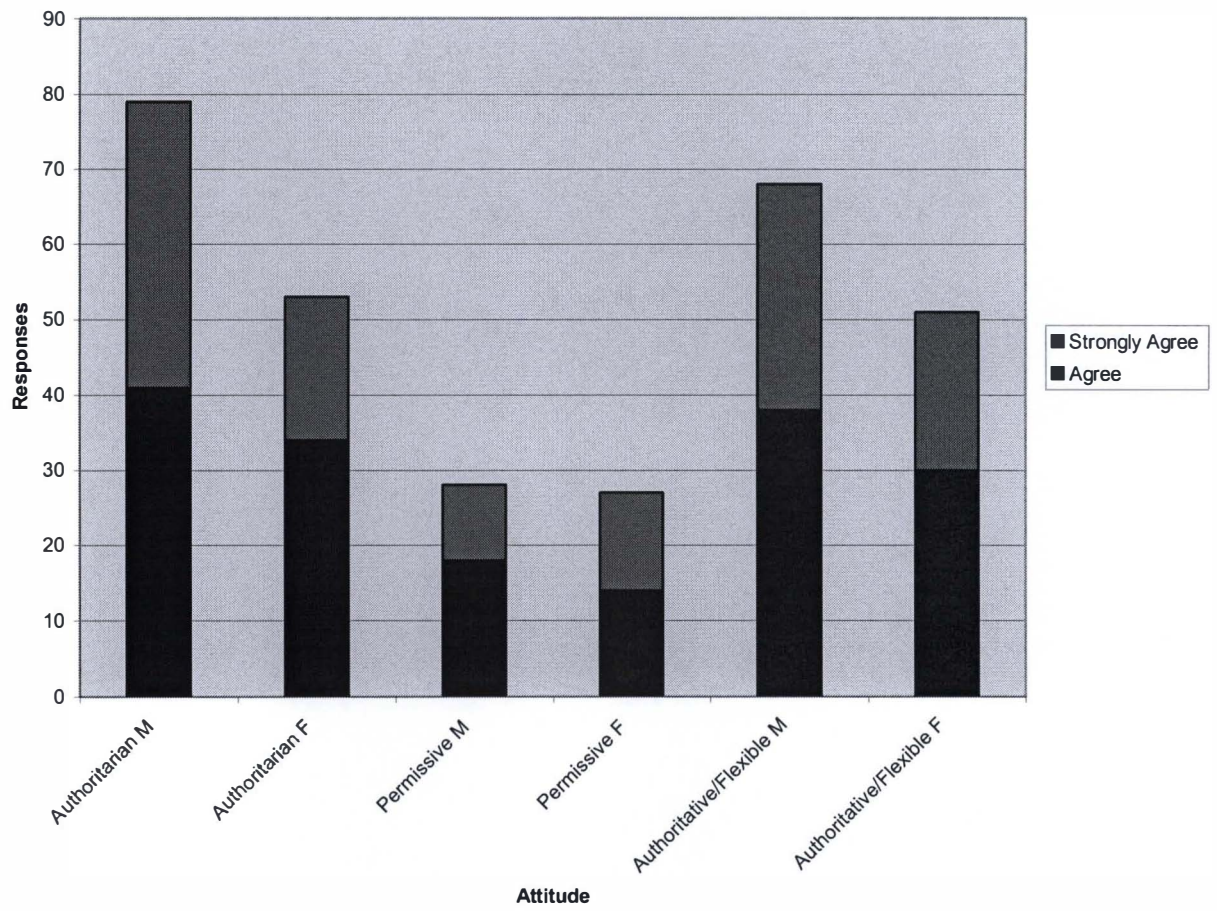


FIGURE 6: ATTITUDE OF WHITES TO AUTHORITY

Boys' Town, Tongaat has two white adolescents. Out of a possible 30 (2 x 15 items) responses, 8 responses were for *mother* being permissive, 5 for *mother* being authoritative/flexible and 1 for *mother* being authoritarian. There were 3 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

In describing their attitude to *father*, the boys had 3 responses for permissive, 3 responses for authoritative/flexible and 1 response for authoritarian. 15 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

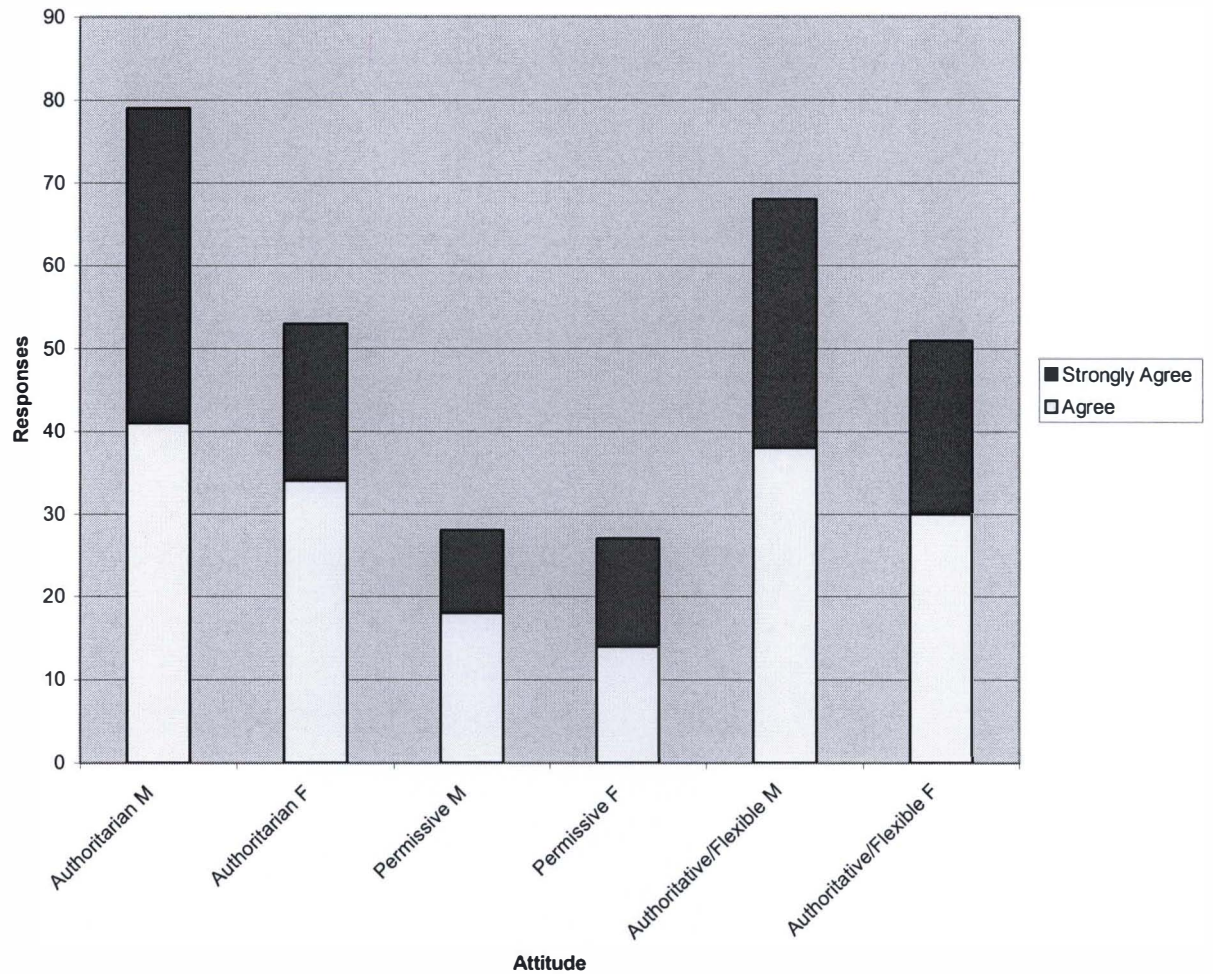


**FIGURE 7: ATTITUDE OF BLACKS TO AUTHORITY**

There were 16 black respondents. Out of a possible 240 responses (16 x 15) 35 responses were for *mother* being authoritative/flexible, 31 for *mother* being permissive and 22 for *mother* being authoritarian. There were 73 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

In responding to attitude to *father*, 27 responses were for *father* being authoritative/flexible, 21 responses were for *father* being permissive and 17 responses were for *father* being authoritarian. 128 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

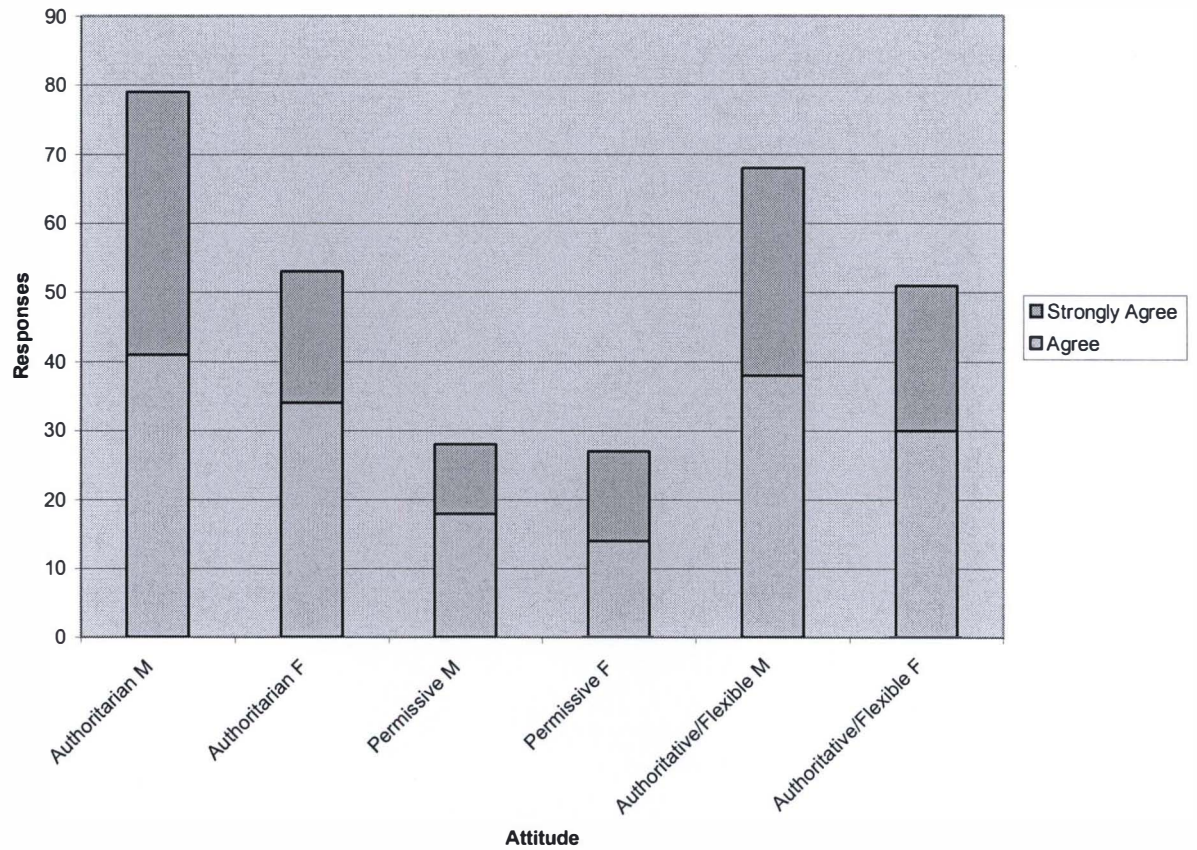




**FIGURE 8: ATTITUDE OF INDIANS TO AUTHORITY**

There were 8 Indian adolescents. Out of a possible 120 (8 x 15) responses, 25 reflected *mother* as authoritative/flexible, 22 reflected *mother* as permissive, and 11 reflected *mother* as authoritarian. 9 responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

Seventeen adolescents reflected *father* as authoritative/ flexible, 16 reflected *father* as permissive and 10 reflected *father* as being authoritarian. Twenty-two responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the response.



**FIGURE 9: ATTITUDE OF COLOURED TO AUTHORITY**

Of the possible 180 responses from the 12 coloured adolescents, 38 responses were for *mother* being permissive, 32 responses were for *mother* being authoritative/flexible and 22 responses were for *mother* being authoritarian. There were 21 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

There were 26 responses that believed *father* was permissive, 22 responses that believed *father* was authoritative/flexible and 20 responses that believed *father* was authoritarian. There were 50 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

Tables 3 and 4 summarises the responses.

**Table 3 : Responses by Racial groupings**

<b>Race</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>No. of possible responses</b>
White	2	30
Black	16	240
Indian	8	120
Coloured	12	180

**Table 4: Attitude to authority figure by racial groupings**

<b>Racial Groupings</b>	<b>Authority Figure</b>	<b>Authority Styles</b>		
		<b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Permissive</b>	<b>Authoritative/Flexible</b>
<b>White</b>	Mother	1 (3%)	<b>8 (27%)</b>	6 (17%)
	Father	1 (3%)	<b>3 (10%)</b>	<b>3 (10%)</b>
<b>Black</b>	Mother	22 (9%)	31 (13%)	<b>35 (15%)</b>
	Father	17 (7%)	21 (9%)	<b>27 (11%)</b>
<b>Indian</b>	Mother	11 (9%)	22 (18%)	<b>25 (21%)</b>
	Father	10 (8%)	16 (13%)	<b>17 (14%)</b>
<b>Coloured</b>	Mother	22 (12%)	<b>38 (21%)</b>	32 (18%)
	Father	20 (11%)	<b>26 (14%)</b>	22 (12%)

More whites viewed *mother* as permissive and *father* as both permissive and authoritative/flexible.

More blacks viewed *mother* as authoritative/flexible and also *father* as authoritative/flexible.



More Indians viewed *mother* as authoritative/flexible and also *father* as authoritative/flexible.

More coloureds viewed *mother* as permissive and also *father* as permissive.

The scores however on the three authority styles for all four racial groupings were very close.

#### 5.2.2.4. ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY BY ADOLESCENTS FROM DIFFERENT PARENTAL ACADEMIC BACKGROUNDS

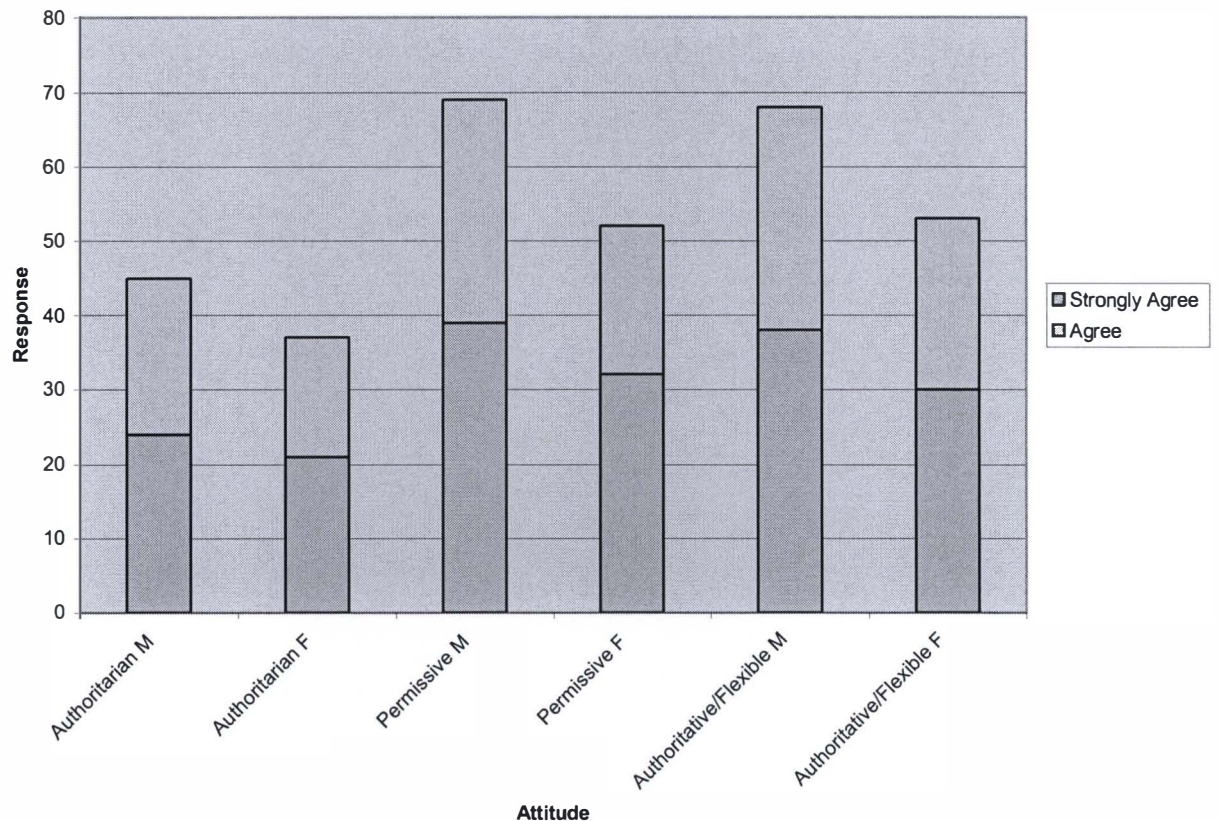
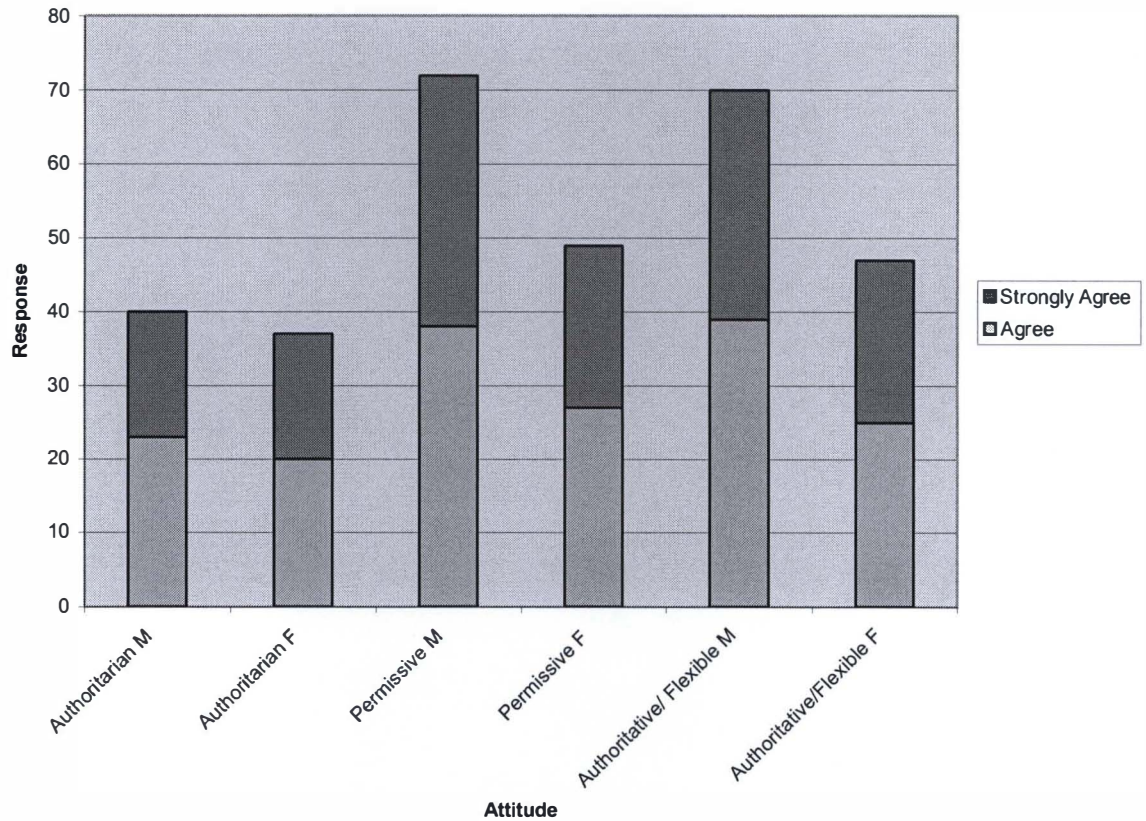


FIGURE 10: ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY OF ADOLESCENTS WHOSE MOTHERS HAVE A GRADE 12 OR LESS THAN A GRADE 12 QUALIFICATION

There were 28 adolescents whose mothers had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification. In response to attitude to *mother* there were 69 responses for permissive out of a possible total of 420 responses ( 28 x 15). There were 68 responses for authoritative/flexible and 45 responses for authoritarian. There were 94 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

In response to the attitude to *father*, there were 53 responses for authoritative/flexible, 52 responses for permissive and 37 responses for authoritarian. There were 144 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

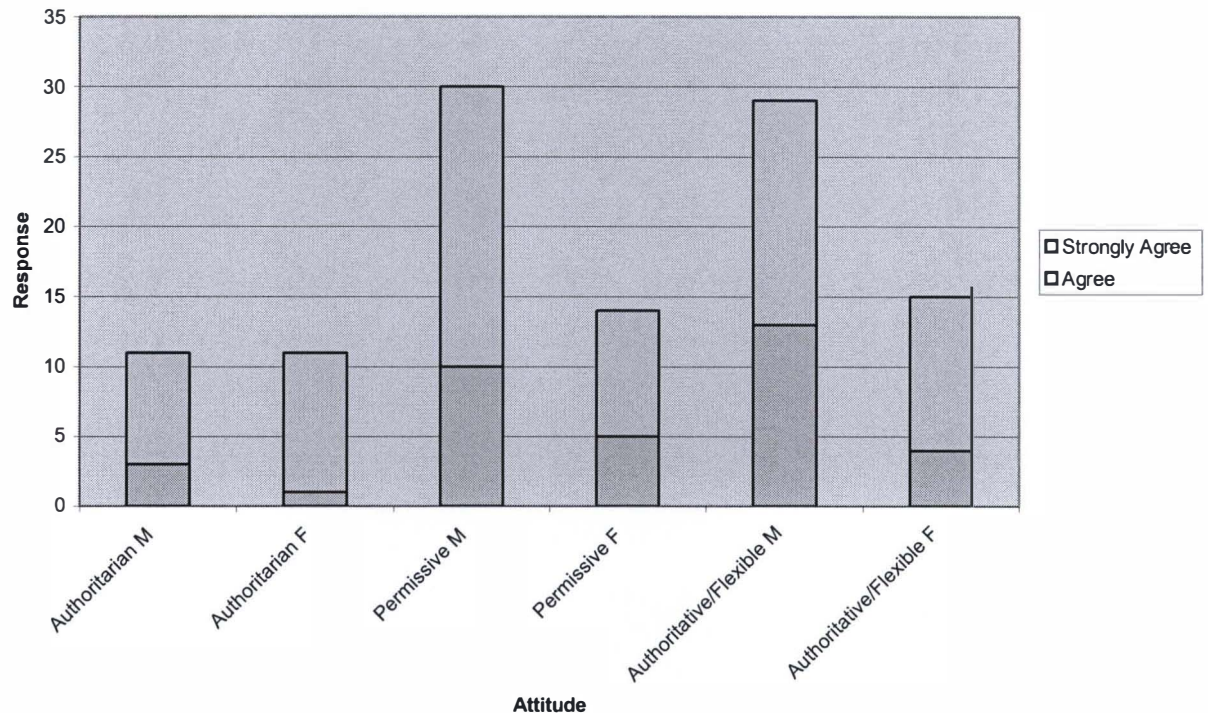


**FIGURE 11: ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY OF ADOLESCENTS WHOSE FATHERS HAVE A GRADE 12 OR LESS THAN A GRADE 12 QUALIFICATION**

There were 29 adolescents whose fathers had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification. There were 435 possible responses (29 x 15). When questioned about their attitude to authority, they had 72 responses that viewed *mother* as permissive, 70 responses that viewed *mother* as authoritative/flexible and 40 responses that viewed *mother* as authoritarian. There were 98 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.



In response to *father* as the authority figure they had 49 responses for permissive, 47 responses for authoritative/flexible and 37 responses for authoritarian. There were 184 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.



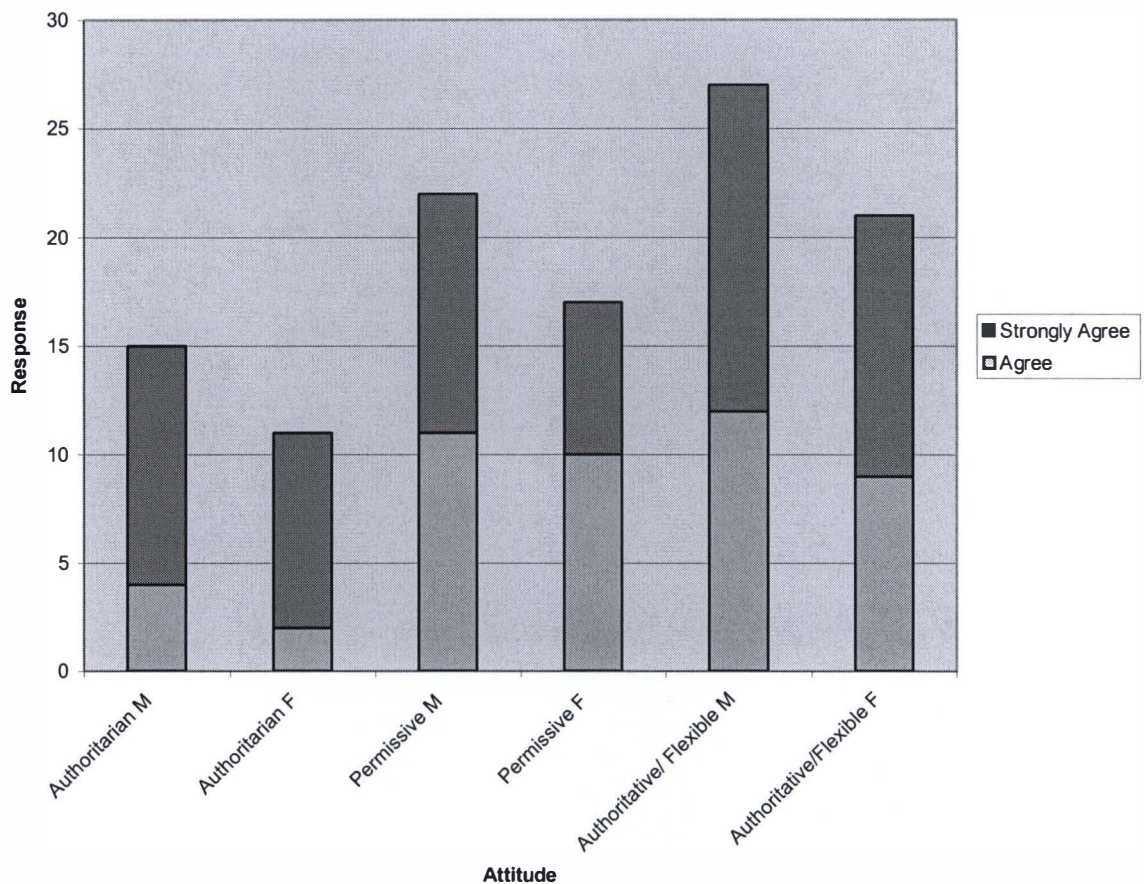
**FIGURE 12: ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY OF ADOLESCENTS WHOSE MOTHERS HAVE POST-MATRIC QUALIFICATION**

Ten of the adolescents had mothers with a post-matriculation qualification. There were 150 possible responses (10 x 15). There were 30 responses that viewed *mother* as permissive, 29 responses that viewed *mother* as authoritative/flexible and 11 responses that viewed *mother* as authoritarian.. There were 11 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

In response to their attitude to *father*, there were 15 responses for *father* being authoritative/flexible, 14 responses for *father* being permissive and 11 responses for *father* being authoritarian. Seventy-two responses neither agreed nor disagreed with

the statements.

An equal number of adolescents whose mothers had post-matric qualification viewed their mothers as authoritarian (11 responses) and their fathers as authoritarian (11 responses). More viewed mother as authoritative (29 responses) than the number of those who reported their fathers as authoritative (15 responses). Less viewed their mothers as permissive (3 responses) as compared with those who viewed their fathers as permissive (14 responses).



**FIGURE 13: ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY OF ADOLESCENTS WHOSE FATHERS HAVE POST-MATRIC QUALIFICATION**

Nine of the adolescents had father with a post-matriculation qualification. Therefore there were 135 possible responses (9 x 15). In responding to attitude to *mother*, they indicated 27 responses for authoritative/flexible, 22 responses for permissive and 15

responses for authoritarian. Twelve of their responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements

In response to attitude to *father* they indicated 21 responses for authoritative/flexible, 17 responses for permissive and 11 responses for authoritarian. Thirty-two of the responses neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

The responses are summarised in tables 5 and 6.

**Table 5 : Respondents by Parental educational backgrounds**

<b>Authority Figure</b>	<b>Parents with matric or less than matric</b>	<b>Parents with post-matric</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mother</b>	28	10	38
<b>Father</b>	29	9	38
<b>Total</b>	57	19	76

**Table 6 : Attitude to authority by grade level and parental educational background**

<b>Parental Academic Background</b>	<b>Authority Figure</b>	<b>Authority Style</b>		
		<b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Permissive</b>	<b>Authoritative/Flexible</b>
Mother – gr 12 or less	Mother	45 (11%)	<b>69 (16%)</b>	68 (16%)
	Father	37 (9%)	52 (12%)	<b>53 (13%)</b>
Father – grade 12 or less	Mother	40 (9%)	<b>72 (17%)</b>	70 (16%)
	Father	37 (9%)	<b>49 (11%)</b>	47 (11%)
Mother – post matric	Mother	11 (7%)	<b>30 (20%)</b>	29 (19%)
	Father	11 (7%)	14 (9%)	<b>15 (10%)</b>
Father – post-matric	Mother	15 (11%)	22 (16%)	<b>27 (20%)</b>
	father	11 (8%)	17 (13%)	<b>21 (16%)</b>



The mother figure was viewed more as permissive when either the mother or father had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification. The father figure was considered more authoritative/flexible when the mother had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification and more permissive when the father had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification.

When mother had a post-matric qualification, mother was considered more permissive and father was considered more authoritative/flexible. When father had a post-matric qualification, both mother and father authority figures were considered authoritative/flexible.

#### 5.2.2.5. ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS FROM DIFFERENT FAMILY STRUCTURES

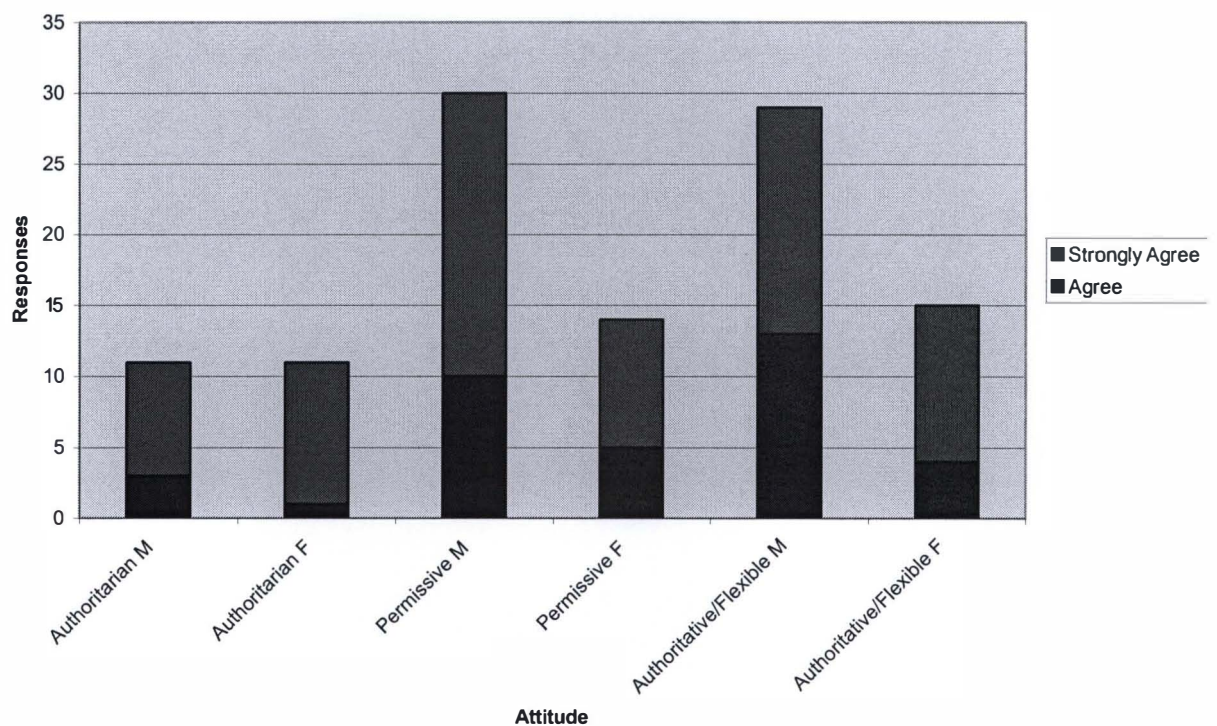
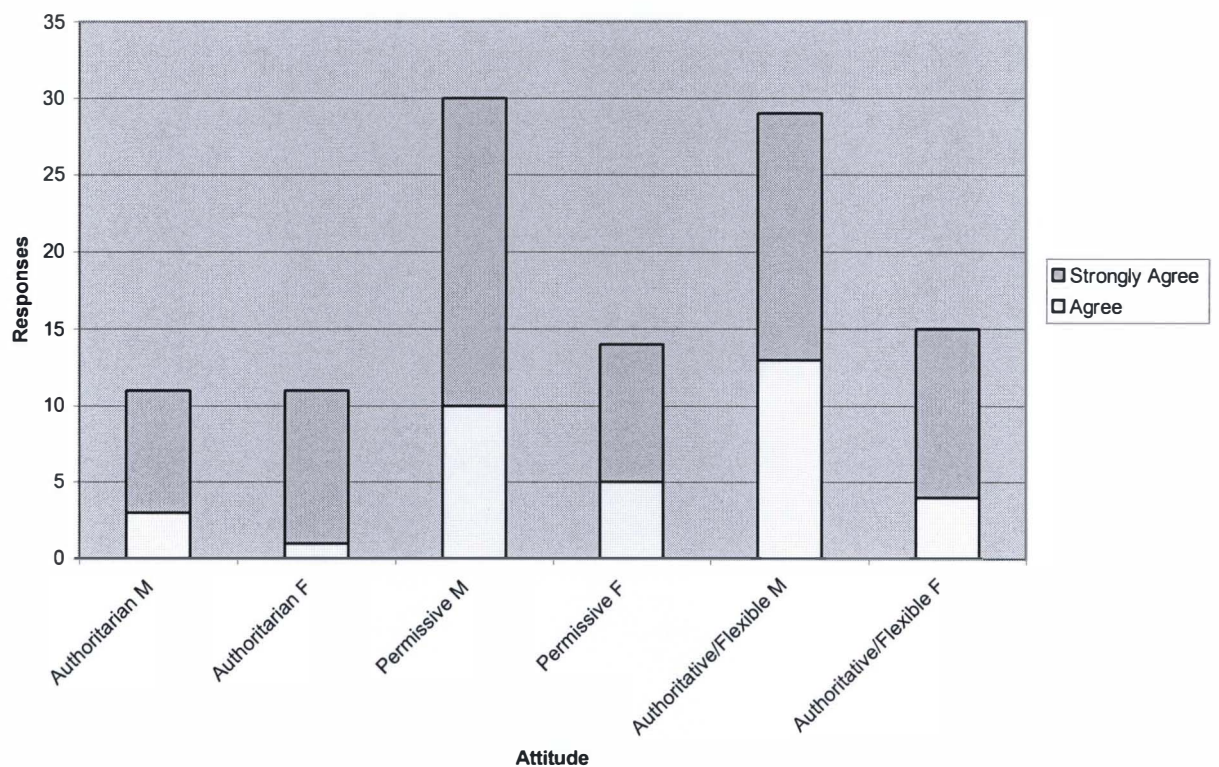


FIGURE 14: ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS TO AUTHORITY FROM SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

Thirteen of the adolescents belong to single-family households. There was a possible 195 responses. In responding to statements on their attitude to *mother*, they indicated

34 responses for authoritative/flexible, 33 responses for permissive and 26 responses for authoritarian. There were 40 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

In responding to their attitude to *father*, they indicated 17 responses for authoritarian, 16 responses for authoritative/flexible and 12 responses for permissive. There were 107 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.

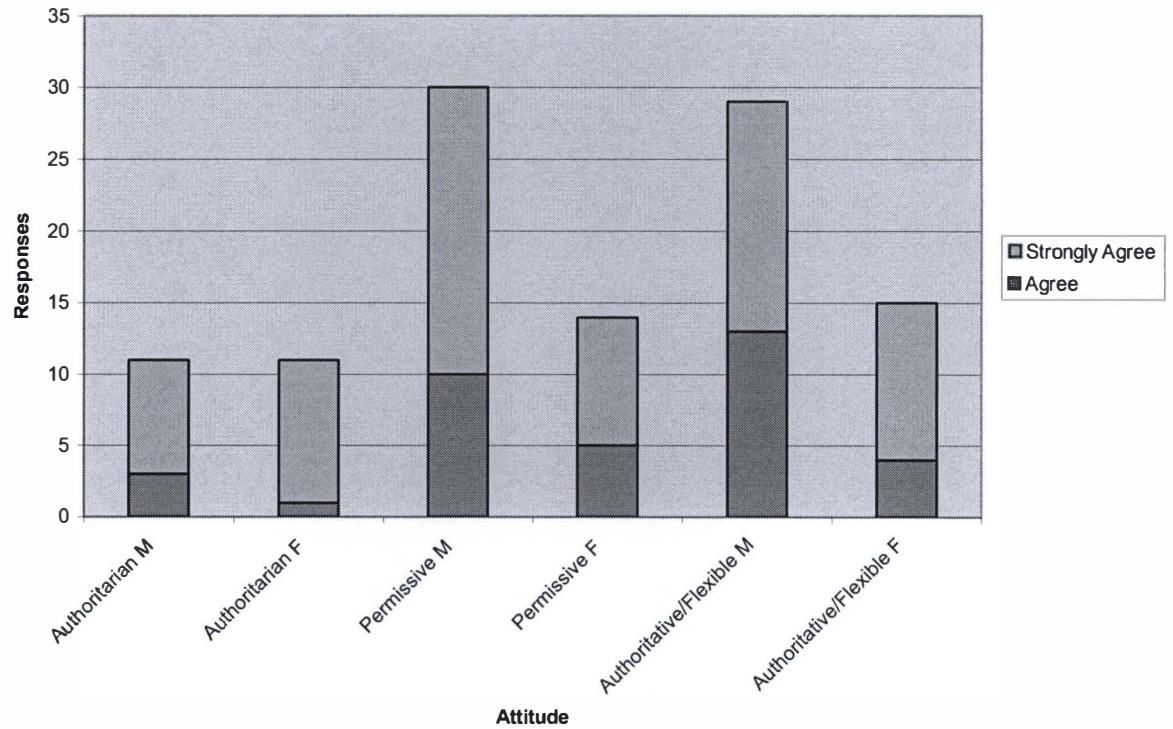


**FIGURE 15: ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS FROM NUCLEAR FAMILIES TO AUTHORITY**

Seven adolescents belonged to nuclear families. There were 105 possible responses. Sixteen responses viewed *mother* as authoritative/flexible, 16 responses viewed *mother* as permissive and 9 responses viewed *mother* as authoritarian. There were 7 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.



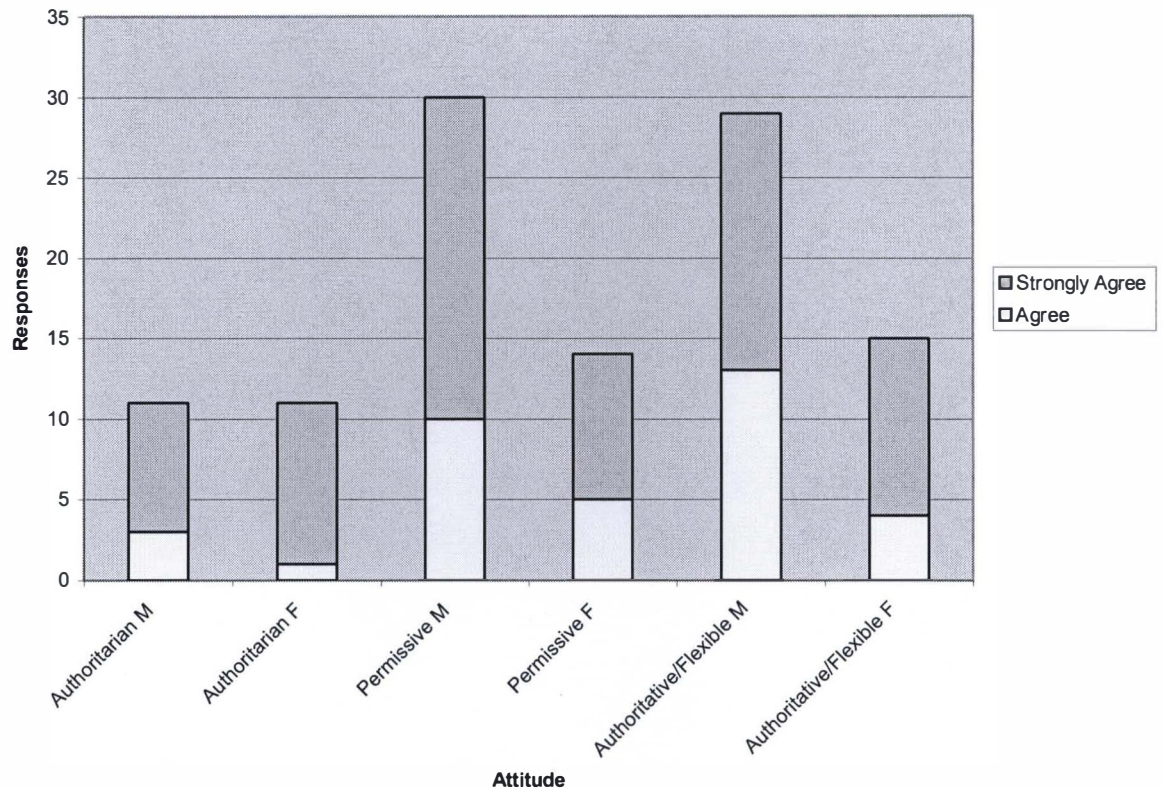
Seventeen responses viewed *father* as permissive, 11 responses viewed *father* as authoritative/flexible and 9 responses viewed *father* as authoritarian. There were 26 responses that neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements.



**FIGURE 16: ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS FROM EXTENDED FAMILIES TO AUTHORITY**

Eleven adolescents belonged to extended families. There were 165 possible responses. In responding to statements about their attitude to *mother*, they indicated 35 responses for permissive, 31 responses for authoritative/flexible and 16 responses for authoritarian. There were 22 neutral responses.

In response to attitude to *father*, they indicated 28 responses for authoritative/flexible, 27 responses for permissive and 17 responses for authoritarian. There were 28 neutral responses.



**FIGURE 17: ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS FROM FOSTER-CARE TO AUTHORITY**

Seven of the adolescents were in foster care. There were 105 possible responses. In response to their attitude to *mother*, they indicated 16 responses for authoritative/flexible, 11 responses for permissive and 5 responses for authoritarian. There were 40 neutral responses.

In response to attitude to *father*, they indicated 14 responses for authoritative/flexible, 8 responses for permissive and 5 responses for authoritarian. There were 54 neutral responses.

Tables 7 and 8 summarise the responses.

**Table 7 : Respondents by Family Type**

Type of family	No. of respondents	No. of possible responses
Single	13	195
Nuclear	7	105
Extended	11	165
Foster	7	105

**Table 8 : Attitude to authority by Family Type**

Family Type	Authority Figure	Authority Style		
		Authoritarian	Permissive	Authoritative/Flexible
Single	Mother	26 (13%)	33 (17%)	<b>34 (17%)</b>
	Father	<b>17 (9%)</b>	12 (6%)	16 (8%)
Nuclear	Mother	9 (9%)	<b>16 (15%)</b>	<b>16 (15%)</b>
	Father	9 (9%)	<b>17 (16%)</b>	11 (10%)
Extended	Mother	16 (10%)	<b>35 (21%)</b>	31 (19%)
	Father	17 (10%)	27 (16%)	<b>28 (17%)</b>
Foster	Mother	5 (5%)	11 (10%)	<b>16 (15%)</b>
	father	5 (5%)	8 (8%)	<b>14 (13%)</b>

Adolescents from single family structures viewed the mother figure more as authoritative/flexible and the father figure as authoritarian.

Adolescents from nuclear family structures viewed the mother figure more as permissive-authoritative/flexible and the father figure more as permissive.

Adolescents from extended family structures viewed the mother figure more as permissive and the father figure more as authoritative/flexible.

Adolescents from foster family structures viewed both mother and father authority figures more as authoritative/flexible.

### **5. 3. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW**

#### **5.3.1. CONDUCTING OF INTERVIEW**

The interview was conducted with five adolescents who had been at Boys' Town, Tongaat for a year or more. The boys were eager and participated willingly. Rapport was established immediately because they had already met the researcher at the questionnaire session. They were open in their responses and spoke freely. The interview lasted sixty-five minutes.

#### **5.3.2. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

The sample group was made up of adolescents 15 – 17 years of age from different cultural and economic backgrounds.

The researcher began the interview by questioning the adolescents more in detail about the reasons for their being in Boys' Town, Tongaat. They cited the following reasons:

- I lost my mother and father and my brother and sister could not look after me.
- I had school problems. I could not sit still in class.
- I was bunking school. I was going to clubs. I was smoking.
- I lived at home with my parent. My father left when my mother was two months pregnant. I grew up with my mother and I felt I took advantage of her. I started doing all the things that were up to no good. I started smoking drugs.

- I stayed with my granny. My parents both worked in Ulundi. They neglected me. My granny could not cope with me.

When asked about the parenting styles of their parents, one adolescent felt that his parents were too soft towards him (permissive) and that is why he took advantage. Another adolescent felt that his home had no 'man in the house' to discipline him. His mother never hit him (permissive). He believes that there was no father figure to 'put me on the line and deal with me when I am wrong'. The presence of the father made no difference in another adolescent's life. His mother was the disciplinarian (authoritarian). His father 'could talk but he could never hit' (permissive).

One adolescent spoke about his father who hit him all the time (authoritarian). He soon became hardened to the hitting and continued to defy his father just to 'get at him'.

The boys generally agreed however that parents made threats that they rarely kept. This encouraged them to defy the authority at home and exert their own form of authority. They joined gangs, started smoking and some even progressed to drugs. The authority of their friends was greater than the authority of their parents. If they refused to participate in the activities of the gangs they were called 'sissies', tormented and ostracised. This compelled them to give in to peer pressure.

One of the boys had a step-parent. He was treated differently from her children. He did not want to complain to his father. He did not want his father to have problems with his step-mum. He kept quiet. The pressure of keeping quiet led him to 'doing other things like smoking and truanting school'.



The boys also cited the conditions at school as a reason for them defying authority. A couple of them said that they were constantly shouted at in school. They were given too much work. They did not understand the work. When they tried to speak to the teachers about it, they were taken to the principal and suspended. This de-motivated them. They stopped going to school and just 'hanged around'.

When the boys were asked about the authority at Boys' Town, Tongaat and what motivated them to obey, they responded as follows:

- They know what a boy needs and how a boy should be treated, how equal the boys are treated.
- We are not as free here as we are at home.

The boys went on to say that they appreciated set rules in their lives. One individual explained an incident that he had experienced. He had gone to play soccer. The grounds were very far from home and he returned late one evening. He was locked out of the house. He was told to return from where he had come. He spent the night with friends. The next day he returned home and nothing further was said about the incident. (He was eleven at that time.) He took advantage of the situation and stayed with friends whenever he felt like it. His parents never asked about his whereabouts.

In Boys' Town, Tongaat, it is different. There are rules/regulations to adhere to. There is firmness in authority. There is supervision and monitoring of adolescent behaviour. The boys are fully occupied with activities and there is no time for laziness or idleness. There is also ongoing training in appropriate skills, especially human relations skills.

Also in Boys' Town, Tongaat, 'you don't have to walk from here to the bus stop or school. Here you have your breakfast, you wait for the kombi, the kombi comes and

takes you to school'. At home some of the boys had to travel long distances to get to school. Parents were not checking to ensure that the boys were attending school. Now the kombi drops and picks the boys at their respective schools and the principal of Boys' Town, Tongaat is informed if any of the boys bunk. They are dealt with immediately. Their privileges are taken away. There is consistency in punishment.

They also believe that the support they receive at Boys' Town, Tongaat, further develops their attitude to authority. They are given an opportunity to talk about their problems. They are not belittled and humiliated. Their parents have all attended a mandatory Parenting Skills workshop. This has improved the parent-child relationship as respect is now mutual.

The boys were confident that the 'anger management skills', 'the breathing exercises', 'the greeting skills', 'the etiquette skills' and a host of other skills that they are continuously learning have developed in them a more positive attitude towards authority. They also believe however that authority figures should listen to and understand adolescents better. This for them is the key to better relationships.

#### **5.4. SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented the results of the research conducted. The next chapter will make recommendations based on the discussion of the findings of the research carried out at Boys' Town, Tongaat.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented and analysed data that was collected during the research into adolescent attitude to authority at Boys' Town, Tongaat. This chapter summarises and discusses the findings and makes recommendations based on the study conducted.

#### **6.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The findings according to the critical questions can be summarised as follows:

**- *What is the attitude of adolescents in Boys' Town, Tongaat, to authority?***

Generally the *mother* was viewed as authoritarian and the *father* was viewed as authoritative/flexible.

**- *Is there a difference in attitude to authority amongst boys of different grades?***

Boys in grades 6-9 viewed both *mother* and *father* as authoritative/flexible, while boys in grades 10-12 viewed both *mother* and *father* as permissive.

**- *Is there a difference in attitude to authority amongst Indian, White, Coloured and Black boys?***

The Indian and black boys viewed both *mother* and *father* more as authoritative/flexible while the white and coloured boys viewed both *mother* and *father* more as permissive.

**- *Does the parental academic background affect the attitude of boys to authority?***

When parents had a grade 12 or less qualification, both *mother* and *father* were viewed as more permissive. When parents had a post-matric qualification, both *mother* and *father*

were considered to be more authoritative/flexible.

**- Does the type of family structure the adolescent boy come from affect his attitude to authority?**

Boys from single-family households viewed *mother* as authoritative/flexible and *father* as authoritarian. Boys from nuclear- family households viewed *mother* as being equally permissive and authoritative/flexible and *father* as being permissive. Boys from extended-family households viewed *mother* as permissive and *father* as authoritative/flexible. Boys from foster families viewed both *mother* and *father* as authoritative/flexible.

### **6.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Nothing compares to the tough, demanding job of being a parent. And nothing beats its rewards. But sometimes, things can go wrong. Divorce, substance abuse, financial pressures, peer pressure and other sad realities can conspire to tear families apart. All too often the children are the victims who are left confused, perplexed and torn apart.

The emotional tenderness of boys, especially, is often overlooked – as if being male somehow means less heartbreaks. But of course, boys are generally no more and no less emotionally resilient than girls.

Boys' Town, Tongaat is filled with boys who have shed more than their fair share of tears. These are youngsters who have faced great personal difficulties and need all the support they can get. This is vital if they are to leave their past behind and face the future with optimism.

The study conducted at Boys' Town, Tongaat, revealed the following:

Although some of the boys grew up in a stable environment, the community in which

they lived was rife with drug-taking and rebellious youth. These boys allowed themselves to be negatively influenced. They turned to crime, fought with others in school and refused to be disciplined.

The adolescents' attitude to their parents varied, depending on parenting styles, from authoritarian on one extreme to permissive on the other extreme. The fact that they are all in Boys' Town, Tongaat, however, indicates that they have defied authority in one form or another.

Twenty-two of the boys (more than 50% of the sample population) were in Boys' Town, Tongaat, because they had been uncontrollable in their previous environments. They had had no fear and/or respect for the authority at home and/or school.

Adolescents interviewed believed that parents should have taken a greater interest in their lives and laid down rules. This echoes the findings of Smetana (1988) who reported very high acceptance by adolescents that parents should make rules.

The adolescents reported that because of a lack of control by parents, they joined the wrong friends, started 'drinking and drugging' and defied authority. They believed that if parents had been stricter about their activities and choice of friends this would not have happened. Tisak, Tisak and Rogers (1994) had similar findings with adolescents in Mid-western United States.

Generally however, the adolescents at Boys' Town, Tongaat, viewed the *mother* figure as authoritarian and the *father* figure as authoritative/flexible.

However adolescents in grades 6-9 viewed both *mother* and *father* figures in a more favourable way (authoritative/flexible) than adolescents in grade 10-12 who viewed *mother* and *father* figures as permissive. This finding is consistent with some American and Australian studies

(Levy,2001) that have indicated that attitudes towards authority become more unfavourable with increasing age, specifically during high school. If this is due to peer influence, then it correlates with the study done by Tyson (2002) with adolescents in Australia and the Eastern Cape in South Africa, where the influence of peers was clearly evident in the shaping of attitude.

The black and Indian adolescents viewed *mother* and *father* figures as more authoritative/flexible and the white and coloured adolescents viewed *mother* and *father* figures as more permissive.

When either the mother or father had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification the *mother* figure was viewed as being more permissive. The *father* figure was viewed more as authoritative/flexible when the mother had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification but permissive when father had a grade 12 or less than a grade 12 qualification.

*Mother* was considered permissive ( I response more than authoritative/flexible) and *father* was considered authoritative/flexible when mother had a post matric qualification. Both *mother* and *father* were considered authoritative/flexible when father had a post matric qualification. A higher parental academic background appears to have a positive influence on attitude to authority.

The *mother* figure from single and nuclear families was considered equally permissive and authoritative/flexible. The *father* figure was viewed as authoritarian in single families and permissive in nuclear families. This contrasts with Nijnatten's study (1997) that showed that adolescents with single or both parent guidance do not subscribe to a negative view of authority.

In extended families *mother* was permissive and *father* was authoritative/flexible. In foster

family structures both *mother* and *father* were seen as authoritative/flexible.

In Boys' Town, Tongaat, 27 (71%) of the adolescents come from families where the average household income ranges from R0 – R3 000. In Tyson's study in the Eastern Cape (2002), the deprivation factor was held accountable for the delinquent behaviour. The deprivation factor therefore cannot be ruled out as having influenced the adolescents' attitude to authority.

However, it should be noted that the scores for the parenting styles for each of the categories, namely grade of adolescents, race of adolescents, parental academic background and family structure were so close. This could be because the 38 adolescents were subjected more or less equally to the various parenting styles or they are confused about their parents' parenting styles because it fluctuated.

Since coming to Boys' Town, Tongaat, there has been a noticeable change in the adolescents. From a life of doom and gloom, hopelessness and ever-changing rules they have a purpose and goals. They have come to appreciate the strict rules at Boys' Town, Tongaat. It gives their lives structure. Within this structure they have started to build meaning. They are assisted by the staff at Boys' Town, Tongaat, who monitor their progress and assist with remedial teaching. The academic support that the adolescents receive motivates the boys to strive harder to overcome cognitive and emotional handicaps.

The nurse on duty (the surrogate mother) is available to put a plaster on a cut, to take their temperature or just to listen to a few gripes. Some of the adolescents have attention deficit problems. Medication, as prescribed by a physician, is a significant source of support for alleviating many of the acute symptoms, and helping to keep the boys in school.

The social workers deal with all their social problems. The adolescent is given immediate attention. The philosophy of Boys' Town, Tongaat, is that the longer the problem exists

without intervention, the more chronic and resistant to treatment it becomes.

The principal (the father figure) co-ordinates the progress of each adolescent.

The adolescents at Boys' Town, Tongaat, are in a system that is conducive to their holistic development. They are encouraged to perform academically and on the sports field. An annual awards function is held to motivate the boys further. Top achievers and consistent workers are recognised.

The Social Skills programme that they are all involved in is continuous throughout the year. The basic skills that they have been taught, like 'greeting skills' and 'anger management' have allowed for their emotional growth. Many of them are already respected members of their community.

#### **6.4. CONCLUSION**

Whatever the adolescents gain in Boys' Town, Tongaat, will be for naught however, if the system within which the adolescent will continue to grow in is also not allowed to change and develop. It is for this reason the parents and caregivers are very much involved in the treatment program and given specific functions to carry out. Children are not born with manuals to guide parents on the right way to bring up a child. Parents rely on what they have learned from their parents and caregivers. Often it means adopting authority styles that 'damage' the child by overprotection or under-protection. It is therefore mandatory for all their parents and/or caregivers of adolescents at Boys' Town, Tongaat, to attend the 'Common Sense Parenting' programme. This commitment from the parents and/or caregivers gives the adolescent the belief that change within him can be sustained, supported and assisted by change in his environment.



## **6.5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Schools today are inundated with behavioural problems. Educators are stressed with excessive workloads. 'Problem' children are easily and conveniently sent to the office and then often suspended. Parents are frustrated. They do not know how to correct the 'problem'. They have in most cases lost control of their adolescents. After the suspension period ends, the child returns to school. The 'problem' is unresolved and compounded by the adolescent having missed out on academic work. School becomes a nightmare, not only for the educator but also the adolescent.

The solution as the researcher sees it is three-fold and can be outlined as follows:

### **6.5.1. Mandatory Basic Counselling courses for all educators**

To talk in terms of responsibility and dignity to a child with a problem is a waste of time. The child has to be given responsibility and dignity. The adolescent can only achieve self-realization through responsibility, adequate professional assistance (both therapeutic and educational) and a caring atmosphere. It is for this reason that it is necessary for all educators to undergo training in basic counselling skills.

Educators need to be sensitive to the academic, physiological and emotional needs of the adolescent. Belittling a learner who has a learning disability will not produce better work from him/her. Suspending a starving learner for stealing someone's lunch may encourage him to take up bigger and more violent crime. Embarrassing a learner who falls asleep during a lesson because he/she had to sit up the entire with a dying parent may encourage the learner to truant or drop out of school.

High quality relationships between educators and learners contribute to the development of more positive self-images by giving adolescents a sense of being valued and cared for by

significant others whom they have learned to trust. It is through these relationships that adolescents are often first exposed to an image of themselves which challenges their own low opinions of themselves as bad and worthless individuals. This enables them to develop a positive self-image. This in turn gives them the confidence to take on new challenges (educational, social, emotional, etc.) in the knowledge that they will be accepted and valued by others, even if they failed. Character formation is of primary importance, and education is one of the means towards achieving this end. Educators therefore should:

- listen to learners who express differently
- encourage learners to express differently
- go out of their way to make lessons interesting
- demonstrate that they understand the needs of learners
- be seen to be fair in their dealings with learners
- be seen to be approachable.

After all, in the absence of school and community psychological services in a large part of South Africa, the educator is often the first one to detect a 'problem'. If the educator is able to deal with the 'problem' in an empathetic manner, the 'problem' will cease to be and the learner will be free to develop optimally.

#### **6.5.2.Mandatory Parenting Skills course**

In every child there is a spark of fundamental goodness. If an adult is unable to find that spark, then it is the fault of the adult, not the child.

Very often, the parent is ill-equipped to deal with a problematic child. Socio-economic problems, high teenage pregnancies and the escalating violence in South Africa are just some of the factors that contribute to poor parenting. Instead of suspending a learner and making discipline the sole concern and responsibility of the parent, the school should invite the parents

and/or the caregivers to attend a parenting skills course. The learner's behaviour should be analysed and both school and home environment should be made conducive to the learner's development. Parents and/or caregivers should be taught how to discipline and how to reward their children. The following strategies and options could be adopted:

- using praise to reinforce positive behaviour
- using consequences to help change negative behaviour
- encouraging positive behaviour
- discouraging negative behaviour
- teaching positive alternative behaviour

The authority figures should be assisted to guide, negotiate (with) and facilitate the adolescents' progress by significantly involving him/her in decision-making. This is best achieved through assessment, planning, implementing and evaluating short-and long- term goals with the adolescent in order to prepare him/her for independent living.

Parents and caregivers should also be made aware that observational learning and modelling plays an important role in learning. They themselves (parents and caregivers) therefore should display socially acceptable attitudes to authority so that the adolescent has a good role model.

### **6.5.3. Behaviour Modification Programmes**

Adolescents who defy authority should be enrolled in behaviour modification programmes designed jointly by the authority figures at school and at home.

- Behaviours to be developed or extinguished must be identified and assessment should be based on broad re-occurring behaviours rather than single incidents
- Emphasis is on the re-inforcement of positive behaviour and incentive systems, rather than a focus on the extinction of negative behaviour and demerit systems
- Adolescents must have a need to earn tokens and thus behave in the desired manner.

Tokens earned at any position must outweigh those available to lower positions.

Adolescents must strive for higher tokens or ranks.

- Certain desirable tokens or privileges must be reserved for adolescents who have achieved in the system

## **6.6. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

- One of the limitations in the present study was the low number in the sample group. Generalising the findings of this study therefore should be exercised with caution.
- The selection of adolescents according to race, socio-economic background, age, and so forth was pre-determined at Boys' Town, Tongaat. As the researcher involved the entire population, she had no choice in the selection. This resulted in a skewed distribution and could have influenced the findings. For example, assumptions were made about white adolescents with just 2 subjects included in the sample group.
- This study examined the attitude of adolescents. A major limitation was the focus on just males and the exclusion of females. The findings and recommendations therefore should be viewed with caution when discussing the attitude of female adolescents to authority.

## **6.7. SUMMARY**

When the adolescents leave Boys' Town, Tongaat the only possessions they will probably leave with will be the clothes on their backs and a small bag of clothing. But they will have sound values, great social intelligence, confidence and a tough, competitive nature – all the skills that they are taught over the years that will make them survivors in the tough world and enable them to contribute positively to their environment. They would have hopefully reshaped their attitude to authority and maybe even adopted a more authoritative/flexible authority style

of their own.

The purpose of this study will be achieved if schools and communities could study the 'rehabilitation programmes' adopted by Boys' Town, Tongaat, and devise individualised programmes that will instil in learners a more positive attitude to authority. The intention should be to boost adolescent self-esteem, give them a sense of self-worth, encourage them to be intrinsically motivated and keep them away from juvenile prison. This will in turn make them better learners of today and greater leaders tomorrow.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

## **ADOLESCENT ATTITUDE TO AUTHORITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess adolescent attitude to authority figures. It is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. The information received from this questionnaire is strictly for research purpose. Confidentiality will be strictly adhered to at all times.

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### **BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**(Place an X in the appropriate block)**

**1. AGE:**

1. 13 yrs	2. 14 yrs	3. 15 yrs	4. 16 yrs	5. > 16 yrs
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**2. RACE:**

1. White	2. Black	3. Indian	4. Coloured
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**3. GRADE**

1. Gr 6	2. Gr 7	3. Gr 8	4. Gr 9	5. Gr 10	6. Gr 11	7. Gr 12
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**4. (Place an X in the block that you consider to be the reason for your placement in Boys' Town)**

1. Abused	3. Neglected	5. Uncontrollable	7. Bad behaviour
2. Truanting	4. Living in detrimental circumstances	6. Destitute	8. Other (specify)

**5. (Place an X in the blocks that apply to your mother)**

**AGE:**

1. 30-40yrs	2. 41-45yrs	3. 46-50yrs	4. > 50yrs	5. deceased
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**QUALIFICATIONS:**

6. less than Gr 12	7. Gr 12	8. Diploma	9. Degree	10. Postgraduate	11. Other (specify)
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**6. (Place an X in the blocks that apply to your father)**

**AGE:**

1. 30-40yrs	2. 41-45yrs	3. 46-50yrs	4. > 50yrs	5. deceased
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**QUALIFICATIONS**

6. less than Gr 12	7. Gr 12	8. Diploma	9. Degree	10. Postgraduate	11. Other (specify)
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**7. ( Place an X in the block that indicates the type of family you have)**

1. single parent	2. nuclear family	3. extended family	4. foster family	5. other (specify)
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**8. (Place an X in the block that indicates your average household income per month)**

1. Under R1000	2. R1001 – R3000	3. R3001 - R5000	4. R5001- R10000	5. More than R10000
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Answer the following items as carefully and as accurately as you can by placing an X in the column that best applies in your situation.

	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. .Neither agree nor disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
1.While I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.					
2.Whenever my mother told me to do something as I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.					
3. My mother has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.					
4. My mother has always felt that what her children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.					
5. My mother has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.					
6. As I was growing up I knew what my mother expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my mother when I felt that they were unreasonable.					
7. My mother felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.					
8. As I was growing up, my mother seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behaviour.					
9. As I was growing up my mother let me know what behaviour she expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, she punished me.					
10.As I was growing up my mother took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but she would not decide on something simply because the children wanted it.					
11.As I was growing up my mother allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and she generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.					
12. As I was growing up my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it.					
13. As I was growing up my mother gave me clear direction for my behaviour and activities, but she was also understanding when I disagreed with her.					
14. As I was growing up my mother did not direct the behaviours, activities, and desires of the children in the family.					
15. As I was growing up, if my mother made a decision in the family that hurt me, she was willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if she had made a mistake.					

	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
1.While I was growing up my father felt that in a well-run home children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.					
2.Whenever my father told me to do something as I was growing up, he expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.					
3. My father has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.					
4. My father has always felt that what his children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.					
5. My father has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.					
6. As I was growing up I knew what my father expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my father when I felt that they were unreasonable.					
7. My father felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.					
8. As I was growing up, my father seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behaviour.					
9. As I was growing up my father let me know what behaviour he expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, he punished me.					
10.As I was growing up my father took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but he would not decide on something simply because the children wanted it.					
11.As I was growing up my father allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and he generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.					
12. As I was growing up my father often told me exactly what he wanted me to do and how he expected me to do it.					
13. As I was growing up my father gave me clear direction for my behaviour and activities, but he was also understanding when I disagreed with him.					
14. As I was growing up my father did not direct the behaviours, activities, and desires of the children in the family.					
15. As I was growing up, if my father made a decision in the family that hurt me, he was willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if he had made a mistake.					



## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were you placed in Boys' Town?
2. How many years have you been at Boys' Town?
3. What position do you hold in Boys' Town?
4. Tell me about your family.
5. What is your general opinion of parenting styles (e.g. Strict, liberal, moderate)?
6. Why do you think adolescents defy authority?
7. What is your motivation for obedience to authority:
  - reward (you will profit) ?
  - coercion ( you will be punished if you don't obey)?
  - Legitimacy (you ought to because they are adults)?
  - Affection ( because you love/respect them)?
  - Expertise (because adults know better) ?
8. Has your stay in Boys' Town changed your attitude to authority? Explain your answer.
9. What is your vision of your future?

## **APPENDIX 2**

P O BOX 391  
UMHLALI  
4390

20 March 2003

Dear Principal

I am an Intern Psychologist currently engaged in research towards the Masters degree  
in Educational Psychology at the University of Durban-Westville

The topic of my research is : Adolescent attitude to Authority.

I will appreciate it if you could grant permission for me to use your school as a site for  
my research. The information gleaned from this study is purely for research purpose.

Confidentiality will be strictly adhered to at all times.

Thank you.

A Govender

P.S. Please contact me if additional information is required.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ the principal of Boys' Town, Tongaat

hereby give permission for you to conduct your research at Boys' Town, Tongaat.

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Signature

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Date

P O BOX 391  
UMHLALI  
4390

5 MAY 2003

Dear Adolescent

I am an Intern Psychologist currently engaged in research towards the Masters degree  
in Educational Psychology at the University of Durban-Westville

The topic of my research is : Adolescent attitude to Authority.

I will appreciate it if you could participate in the research. The information gleaned  
from this study is purely for research purpose.

Confidentiality will be strictly adhered to at all times.

Thank you.

A Govender

P.S. Please contact me if additional information is required.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to participate in the research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date