

**Violence in schools: A correlational study into the relationship  
between an Afrocentric orientation and attitudes towards violence  
among African secondary school learners in Pietermaritzburg,  
KwaZulu Natal**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Social  
Science in the Graduate Programme in Educational Psychology, University of KwaZulu-  
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## **DECLARATION**

This is to declare that the work is the author's original work and that all the sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that this document has not in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university in order to obtain an academic qualification.

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**November 2011**

## ABSTRACT

This correlation study investigated the relationship between Africentric values (*Collective work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics and Self determination*) as measured by the Children's Africentric Value Scale (CAVS) (Belgrave, Townsend, Cherry, & Cunningham, 1997) and attitudes towards violence reflected by *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence* as measured by the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for adolescents (Funk, Elliot, Urman, Flores, & Mock, 1999) with a sample of 200 secondary school learners in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal. There was no statistically significant relationship between the aforementioned Africentric values and attitudes towards violence. Gender was found to be a predictor of *Reactive Violence* with male participants being more prone to endorse reactive violence. Recommendations for school violence interventions based on Africentric values were also provided and discussed in this study.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the learners who participated in this study whose contribution towards the study was highly appreciated. Thank you Lungelo Kheswa for taking the time to assist with the data collection.

Ke lebohe Mama (Aah Sekhesa) le Daddy (Moroosi Sekhesa) for all your support and love and making sure that I was always on time for school. This work is a tribute to your love and enduring belief in me.

To my little grown sister who is more like me than anybody in the world, Mokete Relebohile Sekhesa, ke ea leboha for your constant motivation and unconditional support and love. Now about that Laphroaig...

Nkhono Mamare thank you for your support and love and most importantly for reminding me that friendship is a blessing, ke ea o rata mokhotsi. Nkhono Matsosane Sekhesa my angel and guide (R. I. P). Ntate Moholo Thabo Sekhesa (R. I. P) and Ntate Moholo Letlaka Moteetee (R. I. P), re ntse re le hopotse re le hlompha ka lerato.

To my other mothers who have raised me and encouraged me to love completely, Mangoane Mapaseka Maphathe, Mangoane Lipuo Moteetee, Nkhono Mpolai Cooper, Rakhali Thuloana Sekhesa, Mangoane Masebotha Moteetee, Malome Mamokhalaka Moteetee and Ausi Lineo Sesing-ke qetile Ausi.

To my other fathers who show me how to define my life and reality, Rangoane Paseka Sekhesa, Malome Machaea Moteetee, Malome Frank Moteetee (R.I.P), Malome Mare Moteetee (R. I. P), Ntate Moholo Tsosane 'Papi' Sekhesa (R. I. P), Rangoane Mpara Sekhesa (R. I. P), Rangoane Nati Maphathe, Ntate Moholo Varsay Cooper and Malome Leutloa Moteetee.

My brothers who force me to live at my edge, Hopolang 'Hops/Lehoporo/KON' Ntoi (I see you son), Thabiso 'Pablo' Malekele (will never forget mshimane), Thabo 'Selas' Maseela, Karabelo 'Kubz' Ntsamai (it looks brighter on your side), Lehlohonolo 'Kenif' Lefa, Koenane 'Touch' Moshoeshoe, Molete 'Mledene' Mathaba, Michel 'Mubz' Muberuka, Teni 'Ten-Iron'

Ntoi (it's the bacon kid), Njabulo 'Njabz' Mbhele (dreaming large), Steven 'Stevo' Wambugu and Jacob 'Jay' Wambugu.

My other sisters who always want me to be a better person, Thuto Sekhesa and Nandisa 'Nan-Lo' Tushini, Potsi 'Pots 1' Mochebelele and Phili 'Fly-by' Ntuli.

A special thanks to Sipelele Njokweni whose support and patience was greatly appreciated, thank you. Ndiyakuthanda.

Ntate Mkhize, thank you for supervising this study and being more than a supervisor but a mentor and calming spirit, ngiyabonga Khabazela.

Modimo le Balimo ba ka, ke ea leboha. Khotso, Pula, Nala.

*'The oneness of the community for instance is at the heart of our culture'* (Frank Talk)

## ACRONYMS

ANC.....	African National Congress
CATA.....	Cape African Teachers Association
CAVS.....	Children’s Africentric Value Scale
CJCP.....	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
CIOMS.....	Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences
DoE.....	Department of Education
DEIC.....	Dutch East India Company
HSRC.....	Human Science and Research Council
IPT.....	Independent Project Trust
IBI.....	Independent Black Institutions
LISREL.....	Linear Structural Relationships
NICRO.....	National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders
NP.....	National Party
NSVS.....	National Schools Violence Study
PAC.....	Pan Africanist Congress
RAG.....	Resource Action Group
SABRA.....	South African Bureau of Racial Affairs
SAHRC.....	South African Human Rights Commission
SAIRR.....	South African Institute of Race Relations
SASA.....	South African schools Act of 1996
SEM.....	Structural Equation Modelling
SMART.....	Schools Mediation and Reconciliation Training
SOWETO.....	South Western Townships
TLSA.....	Teachers’ League of South Africa

TATA.....Transvaal African Teachers' Association  
USA.....United States of America  
WHO.....World Health Organisation

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the relationship between an Africentric orientation, as measured by the subscales *Collective Work and Responsibility*, *Cooperative Economics* and *Self Determination* of the Children's Africentric Values Scale (CAVS) (Belgrave, Townsend, Cherry, & Cunningham, 1997), and attitudes towards violence, namely the *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence*, as measured by the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for Adolescents (Funk, Elliot, Urman, Flores, & Mock, 1999), in a sample of school-going youth. The study is based on the Africentric paradigm, as propounded by scholars such as Asante (1987), amongst others. The value placed on maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, communal forms of identity and interdependence and respect between all beings in the universe, is characteristic of the Afrocentric worldview and paradigm (Asante, 1987). An examination of the history of education in South Africa was an important and necessary part of this study because it provided a backdrop into the development of violence in Black schools in South Africa today.

### **Rationale for the study**

The levels of violence in South African schools are very high (Burton, 2008). According to Burton (2008) 15.3% of all learners have experienced some form of violence (excluding property stolen) while at school. About 14.5% of secondary school learners reported being threatened while at school; 4.3% reported being assaulted at school (Burton, 2008). Many of the studies looking at the relationship between learners' attitudes towards violence and Afrocentric values have been done in the United States of America (USA) and none have been done in South Africa. This is despite the fact that the studies in the USA have shown that an Afrocentric socialisation for African- Americans reduces anti-social behaviour in African-American youths (Oliver, 1989), increases self esteem (Thomas, Townsend, & Belgrave, 2003), reduces violent behaviour (Dei, 1994; Banks, Hogue, Timberlake & Liddle, 1996) and in some instances even improves the scholastic achievements of Black learners (Lomotey, 1992). The current study seeks to address this gap in the South African literature: it investigates the possible relationship between Black African school-going youth's attitudes towards violence and Afrocentric values. It is envisaged that the study will contribute towards efforts to address violence in South African schools.

## **Objectives**

The following are the study objectives:

1. To assess the relationship between an Africentric orientation as measured by *Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, and Self-determination* (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and violence, as measured by the *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence* subscales of the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for Adolescents (Funk *et al.*, 1999).
2. To establish the relationship between gender and attitudes towards violence, as measured by the aforementioned scale.
3. To contribute an Africentric perspective to the literature that seeks to understand the dynamics of violence in South African schools.
4. To make recommendations on the possible contributions of an Africentric perspective towards violence prevention efforts in South African schools.

## **Research questions**

1. What is the relationship between an Africentric orientation, as assessed by the Children Africentric Value Scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and attitudes towards violence, as measured by the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for Adolescents (Funk *et al.*, 1999).
2. Are there any gender differences in attitudes towards violence in a sample of school-going youth?
3. Are there any gender differences with respect to the Africentric orientation in a sample of school-going youth?

## **Definition of terms**

*Africentricity/Afrocentricity*: Africentricity/Afrocentricity are terms that refer to the frame of reference through which phenomena are viewed from the perspective of African people (Asante, 1987).

*Nguzo Saba Principles (Seven principles)*: The Nguzo Saba principles are the seven Africentric principles that are intended to connect Africans with their African heritage (Johnson, 2001).

*Collective Work and Responsibility:* This Nguzo Saba principle refers to the importance for African people to work together in solving their problems and taking responsibility for one another and their communities (Karenga, 1977).

*Cooperative Economics:* This Nguzo Saba principle refers to the belief that all resources of the community should be shared amongst its members and looked after by all community members (Karenga, 1977).

*Self Determination:* This Nguzo Saba principle refers to the belief that Africans should decide for themselves what is best for them and their communities (Karenga, 1977).

*Attitudes:* This term refers to culturally shared beliefs and dispositions that people hold that affect their behaviour towards certain objects (Eiser & van der Pligt, 1988).

*Violence:* This term refers to the intentional use of physical force or power against other people that leads to harm, injury, death, psychological harm or deprivation (World Health Organisation, 2002).

*School violence:* This refers to violence within school settings (Cornell, 2006).

*Culture of Violence:* This term refers to violence as a valued activity within a given community (Funk *et al.*, 1999).

*Reactive Violence:* This term refers to violent acts perpetrated as a reaction to threats or perceptions of threat to oneself (Funk *et al.*, 1999).

### **Delimitation and Scope of the Study**

This study measured Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence of high school Black African youth in the Pietermaritzburg area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This study is therefore limited to this region in its scope. The outcomes of this study cannot be extended to other Africentric and violence dimensions beyond the ones measured by the Children's Africentric Value Scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for Adolescents (Funk *et al.*, 1999).

This chapter outlined what the study investigated, namely the relationship between Africentric values and attitudes towards violence, the rationale for this study, objectives of the study, research questions that would be addressed in this study and defined the key terms that would be used throughout this study. The following chapter is a review of the literature that was used in this study.



## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter reviews the literature on the history of education and violence in South African schools. A critical discussion of selected theories of violence and the relationship between attitudes and behaviour are also undertaken. The key dimensions of the Africentric paradigm and their relevance to violence prevention are also discussed.

### **Indigenous Education in Africa**

Africans had ways of disseminating knowledge before the arrival of Europeans to the continent (Bloch, 2009). Indigenous education was informal; it was passed on orally from generation to generation (Nkabinde, 1997). Indigenous education began in childhood and continued into adulthood (Christie, 1985). Children were taught by older members of the family and community about the environment, work and the society (Christie, 1985). Indigenous education focused on teaching values, attitudes, behaviour, religion and economic matters of the people (South African Bureau of Racial Affairs, 1955). Amongst the goals of indigenous education were: developing obedience towards the elders, developing skills such as farming, food gathering and hunting, preservation of culture through oral transmission and making of artefacts, teaching respect for the environment and other living beings, and developing an understanding and respect for spiritual powers (Nkabinde, 1997).

In the following section, it will be shown that the introduction of formal Western education in South Africa was a coordinated and systematic attempt to do away with African ideals and values as reflected in indigenous education. Furthermore, it will be shown that racist and oppressive regimes of colonial and apartheid South Africa deployed education to perpetuate the destruction of African values and sought to replace them with Black subjugation and service to Whites. This situation was met with resistance and violence. A review of the history of formal Western education in South Africa clearly illustrates this.

### **History of Formal Schooling in South Africa**

The politics and history of South Africa are important to consider in any attempt to understand the current state of Black education in South Africa (Nkabinde, 1997). The history of formal schooling and education in South Africa began in the Cape with the arrival

of the first 170 slaves of the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) on 28 March 1658 (The Amersfoort legacy, *A History of Education in South Africa*, n.d.). The first formal school in South Africa was opened less than a month after the arrival of the first slaves in the Cape on 17 April 1658 (Molteno, 1984). This school was set up for slaves of the DEIC. The purpose of schooling for the Dutch was to ensure that their slaves were able to follow instructions. To this end, slaves needed to be taught to speak Dutch. Another purpose of educating slaves was to subjugate them and eliminate their capacity to rebel against forced labour (Molteno, 1984). This was based on the belief that despite the slaves being removed from their native land, their beliefs and independence had not been completely diminished. Christianity was used to dislocate and weaken any inkling towards independence that could still be present (Molteno, 1984). Many slaves rejected Western education by running away from school. The first school was eventually closed down because of these frequent flights by the slaves.

A second school was established in 1663 primarily for the children of the colonists (Molteno, 1984). Present at the school were twelve children of the colonists, four young slaves and one Khoikhoi child (Molteno, 1984). At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the first missionary schools for the Khoikhoi were established (Molteno, 1984). At these schools the Khoikhoi were encouraged to leave their nomadic lifestyle for a more 'disciplined' and 'regular' one. Boys and girls were taught separately and in different tasks, trades for the boys and handicrafts for both. In 1799 the first school aimed specifically for the Nguni and Sotho speaking peoples was established close to King Williams Town (Molteno, 1984).

For Cook (1949), educating Black South Africans was intended primarily to incorporate a 'dependent people' into structures of Western civilization. Evangelizing Blacks was also an aim of educating Blacks (Nkabinde, 1997). This can be seen in many of the missionary schools that were established for Blacks early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in South Africa (Nkabinde, 1997). The missionary societies that were responsible for the establishment of these schools were the following: Moravian, London, Rhenish, Wesleyan, Berlin, Paris Evangelical, Glasgow Missions, Church Missionary Society and the American Board Mission (Behr, 1978). The first African school in KwaZulu-Natal (then Natal) was established in 1853 by Dr Newton Adams with the backing of the American Board of Missions in Amanzimtoti (Adams College-Arise and Shine, n. d.). Up until 1953 and the introduction of Bantu Education, most Black youths in school went to these mission schools (Nkabinde, 1997).

Rejection of and resistance to Western education was common throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century among Black South Africans (Molteno, 1984). Failed resistance attempts against colonialism and the loss of pre-capitalist modes of production, brought about changes in Black attitudes towards Western education (Molteno, 1984). Bloch (2009) revisits the defeat of Chief Bhambatha at Nkandla in 1906 by the British, and suggests that this brought with it the realization by native Africans that resistance and defence of traditional society and ways had ended. The introduction of laws such as the 1913 Land Act and taxes forced young Black men to earn money (Bloch, 2009). Acquiring Western education was one way in which Blacks could adapt to the new political order. Despite what seemed like changing attitudes towards Western education brought on by the new political order, there were many protests and strikes in Black schools pertaining to poor conditions of schools and extreme forms of punishment by White teachers (The Territorial Magazine-Ipepa Ndaba Lezifunda, 1938 as cited in Molteno, 1984).

### **Racial Segregation and Bantu Education**

Racial segregation, which has remained a huge feature of South African education, first emerged in 1676 as an attempt to retain class divisions between slaves and colonists (Molteno, 1984). The first separate schools for slave children were introduced in 1685 (Molteno, 1984). Around this same time separate schools for girls and boys were also introduced. In these schools slave boys were instructed in trades and girl slaves in domestic work. In 1889 the Cape Superintendent-General of Education emphasised the importance of school segregation for purposes of maintaining colonist superiority and supremacy over indigenous peoples and slaves (Wilson & Thompson, 1969).

On 9 January 1949 a commission on Native Education chaired by Dr W.W. M Eiselen was appointed by the National Party (NP) (Hartshorne, 1953). The commission was tasked with (a) formulating aims and principles for a separate education for Blacks in South Africa, (b) determining the extent to which primary, secondary and vocational education for Black learners and teachers could be modified in line with the principles and aims of Black education, (c) determining how best to organize and administer the various branches of Black education, (d) determining the basis on which Black education could be financed, and (e) investigating any other issues that may be related to the ones already mentioned (Hartshorne, 1953).

The Commission reported in 1951 and following its recommendations the Bantu Education Act was passed in 1953 (Molteno, 1984). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was implemented in 1955 (Nkabinde, 1997). Prior to the Act's implementation, approximately 70 percent of African schools were controlled by missionaries of different denominations (Pampallis, 1991). The rest of the African schools were controlled by the state and the communities in which they were located (Pampallis, 1991). Missionary education for Blacks was criticized by the NP government for inappropriately preparing Blacks for opportunities they could not reasonably attain (Moodie, 1994). Bantu Education had an emphasis on developing technical skills in Black learners as opposed to philosophers and thinkers who could later challenge the NP regime (Arnold, 1981). Bantu Education, according to Herbstein (1992), was also aimed at ensuring that Black graduates would not be adequately equipped to compete with White graduates.

The aims of Bantu Education were summarized by Dr H.F Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs, as follows:

It is the policy of my department that Bantu education should have its roots entirely in the native areas and in the native environment and native community. There Bantu education must be able to give itself complete expression and there it will have to perform its real service. The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all aspects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors are open. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze there. This attitude is not only uneconomic because money is spent on education which has no specific aim, but it is even dishonest to continue with it. The effect on the Bantu community we find in the much-discussed frustration of educated natives who can find no employment which is acceptable to them. It is abundantly clear that unplanned education creates many problems, disrupts the communal life of the Bantu, and endangers the communal life of the European (Verwoerd, 1954, p. 24).

Following the implementation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 all African schools were placed under the control of the different departments of Native Affairs (Nkabinde, 1997). Under this new system the state and departments of Native Affairs could now control the curriculum, methods of teaching and the teachers (Parsons, 1993). Primary school syllabi were changed and manipulated to inculcate a culture of obedience and acceptance of allocated social roles. Schools were reorganized on a fragmented sectionalist or tribal basis and post primary education was for the most part located as far away as possible from urban areas (Rakometsi, 2008).

With the introduction of Bantu Education provision of elementary schools was expanded and more Black children enrolled in schools (Nkabinde, 1997). Additionally the cost per student for the government, which until this point was marginally subsidizing Black schools, was reduced (Nkabinde, 1997). This was made possible by encouraging the employment of more under-qualified teachers and paying them less, phasing out school feeding schemes, abolishing school caretaker posts and getting students to fulfil those roles. Consequences of the deliberate inequity in the design of Bantu Education were high levels of illiteracy among Blacks, high failure rates, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient funding and low morale for teachers (Nkabinde, 1997).

### **Black People's Responses to Bantu Education**

Most Black people opposed Bantu Education and according to Molteno (1984), many viewed it as another apartheid tool like the imposition of passes and Bantustans. Parents played a huge part in opposing Bantu Education; many refused to take their children to Bantu Education schools (Molteno, 1984). In some communities such as the Pedi community in the Eastern Cape, a church minister who had hired out the school to government (as was required under Bantu Education), was locked out of the school by the community (Ntantala, 1960, as cited in Molteno, 1984). In Mt Ayliff the community there burnt down their school rather than to lease it to the government (Ntantala, 1960, as cited in Molteno, 1984). The African National Congress (ANC) mobilized parents to join their campaigns opposing Bantu Education (Molteno, 1984).

Three teacher organizations were especially vocal about their disapproval of Bantu Education in the early days of its implementation: the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA), the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) and the Transvaal African Teachers' Association (TATA) (Molteno, 1984).

In the 1960s there were mass demonstrations against pass laws which led to mass killings at Sharpeville and Langa. A declaration of a state of emergency followed, and the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC) were subsequently banned (Horrell, 1964). The 1960s saw more student riots than before the introduction of Bantu Education (Horrell, 1964). Student resistance took the form of boycotting classes, setting fire to classrooms and stoning buildings (Horrell, 1964). These resistance efforts often led to

students being expelled or suspended and in some cases schools were temporarily closed (Molteno, 1984). According to Horrell (1964) the student riots and disturbances were not only fuelled by opposition to Bantu Education but they were also fuelled by the political climate in the country. Police were often present at these riots, shooting and threatening learners and others involved in the unrest.

### **The 1976 Student Uprisings**

Whereas earlier resistance against Bantu Education were led by non-student organizations, the 1970s saw students at the forefront of the struggle (Rakometsi, 2008). Learners incorporated and mobilized their communities, parents and workers to their struggle. The SOWETO (South Western Townships) uprisings of 16 June 1976 were the culmination of protests against the political system, deteriorating conditions of Black schools, Bantu Education and most importantly the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974 which imposed the use of Afrikaans and English as mediums of education in Black schools (Rakometsi, 2008). The use of English was preferred by the Black learners than Afrikaans as the latter was associated with apartheid and the oppressor (Hofmeyr, 2000). The National Party, which comprised the government of the day, believed teaching students in Afrikaans would better prepare them for the world of work (Rakometsi, 2008). A popular slogan by learners during the 1976 Soweto school uprising was “liberation first, education later” (Brooks & Brickhill, 1980, p. 21). The riots continued until the end of the year leaving 575 people dead (137 younger than 18) and approximately 3907 injured (Behr, 1988). The Bantu Education Act was repealed in 1979 (Mabokela, 2000).

The period between 1976 and 1980 in Black South African schools was one filled with protest and unrest and as Van Zyl (1991) put it, it was clear that a constitutional paradigm change was necessary. Two commissions were set up by the then NP government to look into ways of addressing the crisis in education. The first commission was the Cillie’ Commission and the second the De Lange Commission (Lethoko, 2002). The Cillie’ Commission of 1980, led by Justice Cillie’, was tasked with finding out the causes of the 1976 student unrest (Behr, 1988). The Commission reported that Black people and communities were dissatisfied with were inferior education, poor quality of teaching and conditions of Black schools, amongst others (Behr, 1988). The De Lange Commission (1981) headed by Professor De Lange was instructed to develop recommendations for education given the crisis in Black schools (Behr,

1988). Amongst their recommendations were suggestions to make education more consultative and equitable. These recommendations, according to Motala and Vally (2002), were never implemented.

In the 1980s and 1990s Black schools were still spaces of violence and resistance and this prompted the likes of Mandela and Sisulu to encourage learners to go back to school while negotiations regarding education were being discussed (Hartshorne, 1990). Political parties like the ANC and the PAC were unbanned in the 1990s and many of the discriminatory laws like the Land Act and the Group Areas Act that were so representative of apartheid were repealed (Francis & Williams, 1993). These changes were very important for developments in education if one considers what Makhanya (1997) had to say about education being intertwined with the socio-political status of the country.

In 1990 the then minister of White Education, Piet Clase, made it legal for White schools to admit Black learners (Vally, Dolombisa & Porteus, 2002), provided the majority of White parents with children already attending these schools approved (Vally *et al.*, 2002). Black learners were required to write entrance exams in many of these schools before being admitted and had to pay high school fees (Vally *et al.*, 2002). Once admitted, Black learners experienced racism and violence and often felt alienated by school cultures and values that still represented discriminatory ideals (Vally *et al.*, 2002). Vally *et al.* (2002) believe that White principals, teachers and learners were not prepared or particularly accepting of the changing demographic in their schools. Racial and cultural differences were often given as explanations for the difficulties Black learners were experiencing in White schools and the violence against them (Vally *et al.*, 2002).

There have been many positive changes in Black education and education in general since 1994 in the form of the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) and the Constitution of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). This notwithstanding, the scars of apartheid and Bantu Education continue to mark Black education.

### **Black Schooling in the Post Apartheid Era**

The South African schools Act of 1996 contributed greatly to the changes in education from the apartheid era. This Act explicitly spells out government's expectations of what education

in the new South Africa should be like, namely that it should be non-racial, equitable and accessible to all people (Maithufi, 1997). Despite the intentions of this Act, Black township schools have remained solely Black and as poorly resourced as they were during apartheid (Hofmeyr, 2000). More importantly and most disturbing about the apartheid inheritance in Black schools, is the continued violence and disruptions which the likes of Chisholm and Vally (1996) believe has contributed to self destructive and unprofessional behaviour by many Black teachers in Black schools. Instead of conditions improving, many Black schools have lost learners to better resourced White urban schools (Hofmeyr, 2000). It is important to note that Black parents and learners are choosing the English medium former Model C schools as opposed to the Afrikaans medium schools. Hofmeyr (2000) attributes this to Black parents' association of Afrikaans with apartheid, although it is also likely to be spawned by the perception that English is the dominant language of commerce. This seems to suggest that despite the political changes in the country since 1994 some of the fears of discrimination and oppression of the past still persist and continue to inform Black parents' decisions about schooling.

Thus far an attempt has been made to show that the history of education in South Africa subjugated Blacks and also contributed towards making Black schools becoming sites of struggle and violence. Black schools are for the most part still representative of their apartheid past despite attempts to change this. It would seem that democratic, political and legal changes that characterise South Africa today, have failed to totally redress material and cultural loss that Black South Africans and learners in particular experienced during the colonial and Bantu Education eras. An Afrocentric worldview which by and large represents the worldview of Black African learners and which was marginalised during colonialism and apartheid, will be used in this study as a theoretical point of departure in an effort to understand violence in Black South African schools in particular.

### **Understanding Violence**

In this section violence and its typologies are defined with reference to the schooling system. Violence statistics in South African schools are then presented. While numerous theories have been used to explain school violence, a few are tailored to address the historical and ideological roots of violence in South Africa. These theories and interventions are discussed in relation to school violence in South Africa. The Afrocentric paradigm and its approach to understanding violence is then presented and discussed.



## *What is Violence?*

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as follows:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (WHO, 2002. p. 4)

## *Typology of Violence*

The World Health Organisation divides violence into four modes, determined by how violence is inflicted (WHO, 2002). These modes are the following: physical, sexual, psychological attack and deprivation (WHO, 2002). Violence is further subdivided into subtypes which are determined by the victim-perpetrator relationship (WHO, 2002). The first subtype is referred to as *self directed violence*. With this type of violence the victim and perpetrator is the same person. Suicide and self harm are characteristic of this type of violence. The second type is referred to as *interpersonal violence*. This type of violence is between individuals and can be sub-divided into *family* and *intimate partner violence* and *community violence*. Child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and elder abuse are characteristic of *family* and *intimate partner violence*. Youth violence, assault by strangers, violence related to property crimes and violence in the workplace and other institutions are characteristic of *community violence*. The third type is referred to as *collective violence*. *Collective violence* is violence that is committed by large groups of individuals and can be subdivided into social, political and economic violence.

Cornell (2006) believes that the term 'school violence' is merely violence in school settings and emerges out of rising concerns over the violent incidents in schools (especially US ones). Burton (2008) believes that violence within South African schools reflects the sorts of violence experienced by learners outside of school. It is based on the above definitions of violence and school violence that the statistics of school violence in South Africa are presented.

### *Statistics of School Violence in South Africa*

School violence is a common phenomenon in most schools in South Africa (public and private) and more so in secondary schools (Burton, 2008). The high levels of violence in South African schools are due to a combination of the violent history of South Africa and the present inequalities (due to South Africa's apartheid past) and uncertainties in schools (Vally, 1999).

The National Schools Violence Study (NSVS) by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) included a representative sample of 12794 learners from primary and secondary schools, 264 principals and 521 educators from 245 South African schools (Burton, 2008). Burton (2008) reports that 15.3% of all learners have experienced some form of violence (excluding property stolen) while at school. 14.5% of secondary school learners reported being threatened while at school; 4.3% reported being assaulted at school; 5.9% reported being robbed at school with secondary school boys being more likely than girls to be threatened, robbed and assaulted (Burton, 2008). Girls are also more likely to experience sexual assaults and harassment than their male peers (Burton, 2008; Petersen, Bhana, & McKay, 2005). According to Prinsloo (2006) many girls in South African schools experience more violence at school and are burdened with sexual harassment from both male teachers and boys with approximately 30% of girls being raped while at school. These findings are consistent with numerous studies that have shown that males in most cultures are generally more violent than females (Fischer & Rodriguez Mosquera, 2001) and boys more violent than girls (Cotten, Resnick, Browne, Martin, McCarraher, & Woods, 1994). Markowitz and Felson (1998) argue that young males in trying to defend their masculinity defined on the basis of strength and courage may behave violently.

According to reports provided by principals and educators of forms of violence in schools, three in five secondary schools have received reports of learner on educator verbal abuse, one in four secondary schools of learner on educator physical violence, and 2.4% of schools have received reports of learners sexually assaulting educators (Burton, 2008).

The availability of weapons, alcohol and drugs on schools premises has also been identified as one of the causes of violence in schools (Burton, 2008) and as such statistics regarding their availability at schools will be presented here. Three in ten secondary school learners

reported that it is easy to get a knife at school (Burton, 2008). 14.7% of secondary school learners report that it is easy to get alcohol at school, while one tenth of both primary and secondary school learners report that drugs are easy to access at school (Burton, 2008). According to Kann, Kinchen, Williams, Ross, Lowry, Grunbaum and Kolbe (2000) boys are more likely than their female peers to carry weapons to school.

In terms of school violence by racial<sup>1</sup> groupings Coloured learners are the most likely to experience violence followed by Black and White learners (Burton, 2008). Provincial statistics on school violence show marginal differences highlighting the wide and even distribution of the problem. Threats were most common in the Western Cape (21.2%), followed by the Free State (17.4%), Limpopo (16.1%) and KwaZulu-Natal (15.8%). The Free State had the highest levels of assault (12.2%), followed by the Northern Cape (7.7%) and 5.3% in the Western Cape. KwaZulu-Natal's levels of assault were 3.7%. Robbery was most common in the Free State (20.9%) followed by the Northern Cape (19%) and the Western Cape (8.1%). The robbery levels in KwaZulu-Natal were 4.1%. Sexual assault was most common in Gauteng and Mpumalanga (4.4%) and KwaZulu-Natal (3.8%). Theft was widely reported in KwaZulu-Natal (49.4%) followed by Gauteng (46.1%) and Mpumalanga (45.1%). The differences in the school violence statistics across the different South African provinces can be attributed to a number of factors, namely: rates of crime in that particular province, schools being equipped differently, differences in infrastructural development, degrees of intervention by the different provincial Departments of Education (DoEs), and ease of accessing alcohol and drugs in the different provinces (Burton, 2008).

Principals and educators offered different experiences of violence in schools. In Burton's (2008) view this is due to some of the violence being directed at them. Educators and principals reported higher levels of violence at secondary schools than at primary schools. 85.6% secondary school principals and 70.7% primary school principals reported incidents of violence in their schools. 59.7% of the principals reported verbal abuse by learners towards educators (Burton, 2008). One in four secondary school principals reported instances of physical violence inflicted on educators by learners and 2.2% reported instances of sexual violence (Burton, 2008). 41% of principals reported having knowledge of educators verbally abusing learners (Burton, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> The racial groupings are used for illustrative purposes; the author does not endorse them as scientific or biological constructs.

Corporal punishment is still being exercised in some schools (Burton, 2008) despite it being criminalised. A 2005 CJCP Youth Victimization study showed that 51.4% of learners continue to be caned or physically punished in schools (Pelser, 2008). According to Burton (2008) and Gannon (1998) many educators cite the lack of punishment alternatives to corporal punishment as one of the reasons why levels of violence and ill discipline have risen in schools. A provincial look at the continued use of corporal punishment in secondary schools places the Northern Cape as the highest at 90% followed by Limpopo (81.1%) and the Eastern Cape at 77.7%. KwaZulu-Natal levels were 48.7% (Burton, 2008). The provincial levels of corporal punishment show a strong correlation with levels of learner violence (Burton, 2008).

The perpetrators of violence are usually classmates and fellow students (Burton, 2008). Despite victims knowing their perpetrators many incidents of violence go unreported (Burton, 2008). Failure to report acts of violence in Burton's (2008) view can be attributed to stigma, fear, further victimization and belief by learners that the acts are not serious enough for reporting. Secondary school learners report less than primary school learners on all crimes except with assaults. Burton (2008) suggests that the reason for this could be the consequences of assaults with weapons are often difficult to hide. In the NSVS study there was no significant difference in terms of reporting between secondary school boys and girls (Burton, 2008).

The fact that many learners did not believe that incidents of violence against them were serious enough for reporting, Burton (2008) contends, is proof of an acceptance of violence as an ordinary day-to-day occurrence, making violence a norm in learners' lives. Pelser (2008) in her discussion paper for the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Youth Policy Initiative (May 2008) was particularly concerned with the normalization of crime by the youth through socialization by key institutions like their homes, school and communities. For Pelser (2008) the normalization of violence by the youth directly affects how their identities are formed. The fact that identities formed with violence as a component is cause for concern given the copycatting criminal behaviour that, according to Altbeker (2007), is the cause of the high levels of crime and violence in South Africa.

The statistics of school violence in South Africa are very scary and some of the explanations for this violence have been alluded to. A discussion on theories of school violence is necessary to contextualise and make sense of school violence in South Africa.

### *Theories of School Violence: An Overview*

Numerous theories have been used to explain school violence but very few that take into consideration the historical roots of violence in South Africa. Failure to do this, is worrisome on two levels (1): it ignores documented evidence attesting to the cause of school violence (with Black learners) in South Africa lying in a political and educational history that through force (and sometimes violence) marginalised the interests, values and traditions of native Africans (Vally *et al.*, 2002); and (2) it ignores the role that racism and inclusion of Black learners in previously White schools (de Wet, 2002) have had on school violence today. There are some theories on school violence whose tenets resemble Afrocentric ones such as Hirschi's (1969) Control theory which will be discussed. However, King (1997) offers an Afrocentric theory on violence that in the author's view is best suited for explaining school violence and how it relates to Black learners in South Africa.

Some of these theories in South Africa attribute school violence to violent practices such as initiations, hazing, corporal punishment and the unkempt school grounds (Burton, 2008). The South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) is very clear about the cessation of these violent and discriminatory practices in schools which are recognised to be of the past (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). The majority of Black townships schools are under resourced as a consequence of Bantu Education and this limits these schools' ability to improve their infrastructure in order to make them safer. Risk taking behaviour especially with male learners (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999 as cited in Marcus 2007; Marcus, 2007, Swahn, Simon, Hammig, & Guerrero, 2004; Thornberry, Huizinga, & Loeber, 1995), the availability of drugs, alcohol and weapons at schools have also been cited as causes of school violence internationally and in South Africa (see Burton, 2008; Farrington, 1998; Maguin, Hawkins, Catalano, Hill, Abbot, & Herrenkohl, 1995; Swahn *et al.* 2004). Here too we see South Africa's apartheid past weighing on school environments. Drugs, alcohol are disproportionately available in Black African and Coloured communities and learners have access to them (Parry, 1998).

Farrington (1998) and Henry, Avshalom, Moffitt, and Silva (1996) amongst others mention that personality traits like hyperactivity, impulsiveness, and poor behavioural control and attention problems explain youth violence. This may be true for some incidences of school violence perpetrated by learners, but availability of drugs such as Ritalin have been identified as useful in dealing with impulsivity and similar behaviour control problems (Harding, Judah, & Gant, 2003). Despite available treatments that can help in managing behavioural issues, not all township schools and their Black learners have access to psychological and medical resources that would help in this regard, nor are these treatments always acceptable as in the case of Ritalin. Apartheid and Bantu Education provide a partial though important explanation for the unavailability of appropriate treatment resources in Black schools.

Writing from a feminist perspective, Mills (2001) argues that violence in Australian schools is primarily perpetrated by boys. This finding is also true of South African schools (see Burton, 2008; Petersen *et al.*, 2005). The Australian school system Mills (2001) believes accommodates and encourages violent behaviour in boys. To illustrate how the schooling system does this Mills (2001) refers to 5 signifiers of masculinity (Horsfall, 1991, as cited in Mills, 2001). These signifiers are sport, work, alcohol, power over women and power over other men. Sports are a major component of schooling activities and the sports that emphasize strength, aggression and competitiveness are usually the most valued. Mills (2001) believes that schools are both places of work for teachers and also provide students with realistic role play of gendered life in the workplace. According to Mills (2001) there is also a greater appreciation for masculine subjects and girls who are drawn to these subjects are often victims of harassment. Although alcohol does not feature very much in Australian schools, it is often a topic of discussion between students during school and is valued by students in achieving a masculine ideal (Mills, 2001).

Power over women according to Mills (2001) is a major factor which is evident in gendered power dynamics in relationships between teachers and between students and teachers; these power dynamics often play themselves out as intimidation and sexual threats (Milligan, Thomson, & Ashenden and associates, 1992; Gilbert, Gilbert, & McGinty, 1995; Collins, Batten, Ainley, & Getty, 1996, as cited in Mills, 2001). According to Mills (2001, p. 23), “power over other men is most ‘glorious’ when it represents the domination of other men”. Play ground fights and hitting of homosexual boys (Connell, 1995 as cited in Mills, 2001) are illustrations of this signifier of masculinity. Mills’s (2001) assertions which are also echoed

by Doss and Hopkins (1998) may also be partially true for the South African school experience and boys behaviour in particular. As discussed in the previous chapter, formal education for Blacks was designed along racial and gendered lines to create a class that would serve and adhere to White hegemony. Indigenous education which served Black people and their needs was forcefully disregarded together with its values and ideals which resulted in resistance from all sectors and genders of Black communities towards formal European education. It could be argued that these speak to power dynamics in the service or interest of dominant White masculinities of the time.

Given the oppressive and violent history of education for Blacks in South Africa, the disproportionate allocation of resources to schools caused by apartheid and Bantu Education that continues to affect Black schools, and the racism and difficulties that Black learners experience in previously White schools, it would seem plausible that Black learners in particular are struggling to form bonds with their schools. Hirschi's (1969) Control theory which focuses on the importance of forming bonds as a deterrent for delinquent and violent behaviour has been identified as a useful theory in explaining violence in schools.

According to Hirschi's (1969) Control theory, acts of delinquency are the result of weakened and or broken bonds between the individual and their society. Hirschi (1969) uses four elements of social bonding that in his view explain why individuals conform or deviate from social norms, in this case violence and delinquency. These four variables are attachment, commitment, involvement and beliefs. *Attachment* refers to empathy and sensitivity that one has towards others. Hirschi (1969) believed that the more an individual was attached to others the less likely they were to resort to delinquent acts. School violence according to the attachment variable would be caused by learners lacking empathy and sensitivity towards one another. This view is consistent with Schiele's (1996) Africentric explanation of youth violence. According to Schiele (1996) in societies that place materialism over any other forms of self worth, recognition of a shared humanity amongst peoples is diminished and people view one another as objects that can be harmed with little remorse. This applies to South African schools too where race during apartheid and arguably today ensured that Black learners were disconnected from each other and their White, Coloured and Indian peers.

*Commitment* refers to an individuals' investment towards a particular activity that is socially valued and accepted. The time spent pursuing this particular activity makes it more difficult

to rationalise deviance from societal norms. For instance, individuals who have worked hard in developing a good reputation in their community and in the process achieved certain accomplishments would be less likely to break the rules of that community which they have invested so much in and benefitted from. School violence as perpetrated by learners could also be explained by a lack of commitment to school norms and values. Teachers and learners have been criticised by some education commentators for inheriting a negative attitude towards teaching and learning stemming from apartheid (Smith & Schalekamp, 1997). Shared norms and values were defined by the apartheid state according to racial and tribal lines; this raises real questions about how these norms and commitment to them in South African schools can be achieved. *Involvement* refers to participation in conventional activities such as swimming and playing soccer or netball, amongst others. Hirschi (1969) believed that participation in conventional activities would leave the individual with little time to participate in delinquent acts. The issue of limited resources in many Black township schools has already been discussed. A lack of resources and activities in schools would limit any involvement potential of many Black learners and according to Hirschi (1969), leave time for participation in delinquent acts.

*Belief* refers to the common value systems of a particular society. According to this factor people are more likely to conform and abide by social norms, laws and rules they believe in. Hirschi (1969) recognised that individuals varied in their degrees of belief and thought this to be a reflection of their degree of attachment towards those systems representing those beliefs. Schools in South Africa as societies do not reflect the beliefs of Blacks with some White teachers even suggesting that Black children are victimised in White former Model C schools because of differing beliefs between Blacks and Whites (Vally, 1999). It could also be argued that Black schools which were built on belief systems opposed to Black belief systems, too suffer from an inconsistent and ambiguous belief system.

Control theory has been very successful in explaining school violence in the US (see Booth, Farrell & Varano, 2008; Jenkins, 1997; Peguero, Popp, Latimore, Shekarkhar & Koo, 2011) but has never been tested in South Africa. The theory, apart from explaining how certain variables of social bonding can lead to delinquency and violence, does not address the historical and political variables that lead to certain bonds being ruptured or stunted. History and politics contextualise and explain a lot of the school violence in South African schools. An Afrocentric theory by King (1997) although based on an African-American experience is



the most promising theory for explaining school violence in South Africa because it recognises the importance of history and politics as the root causes of a lot of problems facing Black youths and their communities.

According to King (1997), America's (United States of America) history of slavery, institutional racism and violence, and economic and social stagnation of African-Americans (especially African-American males), the lack of Black role models for young African-American males due to incarceration, death and absent African-American fathers, high levels of illiteracy contributing to fewer occupational opportunities, introduction of hard drugs and alcohol into African-American communities, disconnection and alienation of African-American males from their communities and a normalization of violence in American society, have all contributed to the high rates of criminality and violence committed by African-American youths. King (1997) believes these conditions have led to the development of self destructive attitudes, perceptions and psychological states in African-American youths. The violent behaviour witnessed from African-American youths is an expression of their social and emotional disconnectedness from their cultural heritage, themselves and their communities (Silberman, 1978).

Although the above-mentioned authors were writing from an African-American experience in the US, one cannot ignore the historic, socio-economic and political similarities between Black South African youths and African-American youths. Violent oppression of Blacks as perpetuated by White Europeans is common to both South Africa and the USA. High levels of Black illiteracy are also a common condition between the two countries. Bantu Education in South Africa ensured that Black people received very poor education leading to violent protests by Black communities and learners. The poor quality of education that many Black South Africans received and continue to receive has limited employment opportunities and economic emancipation. Broken homes and single parent households were a common feature of many Black families during apartheid, which through laws like the 1913 Land Act and Group Areas Act forced Black people off their lands and men were forced to leave their families to seek work away from their families (Bloch, 2009). HIV/AIDS has also affected Black families, causing a situation where many Black households are either headed by single parents or children themselves (Smit, 2007). The majority of Black South African learners also live in communities that because of apartheid have been characterised by drugs and alcohol abuse (Society for the Study of Addiction, 2005). All of these conditions facing Black

South African learners, their families and communities, according to King (1997), contribute to Black youths being disconnected from each other, their communities and their cultural heritages leading to their violent behaviour.

Numerous studies testing the role that historical, political and cultural oppression have had on African-American youths and their behaviour, have confirmed that an Afrocentric value system which embraces Africans history and culture reduces violent and drug abuse related problems. One such study was by Belgrave *et al.* (1997) who found that African-American youths with Afrocentric values were more likely to have negative attitudes towards drugs and alcohol. This is a useful finding given what has been reported about relationship between school violence and alcohol and drug use by learners. Another study looking at risk behaviour with African Americans youths was by Flay, Graumlich, Segawa, Burns, Holiday and Aban Aya investigators (2004). They found that the Nguzo Saba principles (Afrocentric principles, discussed at length below) reduced high risk behaviour (that can lead to violence) with African-American youths. Another study by Banks *et al.* (1996) confirmed that the inclusion of an Afrocentric component to social skills programs for African-American youths leads to decreased anger and increased assertiveness and self control. Further, another study by Jagers, Sydnor, Mouttapa and Flay (2007) found that African-America youths with communal values similar to those in the Nguzo Saba principles espoused negative attitudes towards violence.

Despite the similarities between the historical, social and economic conditions between Black South African youth and their African-American counterparts in the US, the relationship between an Afrocentric orientation and attitudes towards violence in Black African communities has not been investigated. Hardly any violence prevention programmes in schools in South Africa tap into African value systems. A review of the school violence interventions in South Africa is discussed in the section that follows.

### *School Violence Interventions in South African Schools*

According to a review of violence interventions in South African urban schools done by the Mathews, Griggs, & Caine (1999), the problem with school violence interventions in South Africa is that they are not coordinated and are conducted in isolation leading to very little sharing of successes and failures. For school violence interventions to be successful, a

multifaceted approach is necessary (Burton, 2008; Mathews *et al.*, 1999; Zwane, 1997). These different facets would be schools, families and communities (Mathews *et al.*, 1999).

The aim of many family-based interventions is to offer short-term support to families with delinquent adolescents and training on positive parental skills to caregivers and parents in the long term. This long-term intervention is based on psychological studies and literature that argues that good attachment between parents and their children through good parenting lessens the chances of children developing violent behaviours (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). A South African study that has used a family based intervention is the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO) Family Group Conference intervention (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). This intervention involves family members and the offender getting together to redress the harm that the crime has caused. Through this intervention families are empowered to play supportive roles in their children's lives.

The importance of family will be dealt with in more detail in the section on Afrocentricity, as family-based interventions are consistent with the Afrocentric paradigm. However, for Black Africans the concept of family is a lot wider than is defined in the NICRO intervention and similar ones. Family for most Black South African people includes neighbours and all members of one's community and not just one's biological family. The breadth of the concept of family becomes more important when one considers the impact that HIV/AIDS has had on traditional nuclear families especially in Black communities. Many Black learners come from backgrounds where a mother, father or both have passed on due AIDS (Mathews *et al.*, 1999); an intervention like this can only have a limited impact if the definition of family refers only to the nuclear definition.

School based interventions have also received a lot attention in the literature and studies looking at school violence. Dwyer, Osher, & Warger (1998), in efforts to make schools safer, violent-free places, recommended amongst others that schools should involve both communities and families in meaningful ways. It is envisaged that community and family involvement could not only reduce violence within schools; it is also likely to encourage positive relationships between learners and teachers and hence contribute positively towards academic excellence. In KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), the Schools Mediation and Reconciliation Training (SMART) programme sought to teach learners, educators, and school

governing body's conflict resolution skills (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). According to Foulis and Anderson (1995) the programme has been well received by schools.

Access to psychological services for learners has also been a useful school violence intervention tool. A project between Chatsworth's Aryan Benevolent Home and a local school (Durban) is an example of such an intervention (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). However, although such interventions might be useful, they are not replicable in many Black schools and communities due to limited resources and commitment from community members.

There is huge support in the literature highlighting the importance of good school management as a tool to combat violence and delinquency (Mathews *et al.*, 1999; National Association of Child Care Workers, 1999; National Crime Prevention Council Canada, 1995). Democratically run schools where school management, governing bodies and learners work together has been proven to improve the morale of teachers and learners. School rules are adhered to and rewards and punishments are exercised in a fair and non discriminatory fashion (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). Democratically run schools allow for an environment where conflict resolution strategies can be enforced without the use of force or coercion (Harber, 1998). The South African Schools Act of 1996 embraces these ideals and insists on the formation of school management structures that involve all members of the school community (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Interventions that are based on ideals of democracy are consistent with the shared responsibility component of the Afrocentric paradigm that emphasises the active involvement of all parties in a community to solve its problems.

Schools and teachers play an important role in the socialisation and development of learners who model the behaviour of their teachers (Chisholm & Vally, 1996). Hence alternative punishment methods that do not use violence like corporal punishment have been cited as important in attempts to create less violent schools (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). Corporal punishment has been outlawed in South African schools but there are still reports that this form of punishment is still being used in some schools across the country (Burton, 2008).

Well looked after and controlled school premises and buildings have been widely cited as another intervention (however short term it may be) against school violence (Burton, 2008; Mathews *et al.*, 1999). Although a short term intervention, schools should be able to control

what learners bring into schools in efforts to prevent weapons and drugs on school premises (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). Burton (2008) highlights the importance of this by drawing attention to the dangers and possible victimisation of learners by certain unkempt areas like sports fields and failure to secure school grounds with adequate fencing, which makes it easier for outside people to enter schools and victimise learners. Many schools in South Africa, especially township and rural schools have poor infrastructure and are not adequately secured.

Community based interventions have also been used. Given that schools are integral parts of communities in which they are located, interventions require community involvement (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). Keeping children in schools also keeps communities and schools safer, as it has been shown that violence in schools is often perpetuated by people who are not in school, unemployed and are at risk of being further marginalised by society (Mathews *et al.*, 1999). Moloto (1998) argues that failure of children to adjust to their communities is often a risk factor for the development of delinquency and violent behaviour. Engaging activities at schools can assist in reintegrating youth into their communities. Harber (2001) discusses an intervention and training pilot study that was done with three schools in Durban. The study looked at how coordination and mutual support between schools and the police can reduce crime and violence. The study proved to be very successful; the main conclusions were that interventions dealing with crime and school violence can be economical and that the scourge of crime and violence in South African schools is not a helpless, irreversible condition. The Resource Action Group (RAG) at Nooitgedacht in the Cape Flats (Mathews *et al.*, 1999) is another example of a community-based intervention. Youth are taught by other youth computer literacy skills, leadership skills, personal development skills, fund raising and strategic management skills. This community based intervention has helped remove children from the streets and away from negative outside influences (Mathews *et al.*, 1999).

There is strong support that school violence interventions should make use of all the resources within schools and in the community to curb the problem. This view is consistent with the Afrocentric paradigm. As previously noted, however, material and resource-based interventions are a stretch for most poor Black schools as a consequence of apartheid. Although some of these interventions are laudable, they focus on a few components and this makes them less comprehensive. Failure to acknowledge the social, historical and economic realities of most black societies in South Africa, including colonialism and the scourge of

apartheid, is a major threat to the usefulness of these interventions. Afrocentric approaches address these concerns.

### **Understanding Violence: An Afrocentric perspective**

This section discusses violence from an Afrocentric perspective. The terms ‘Afrocentricity’ and ‘Africentricity’ will be used interchangeably throughout this study. Asante (1987, p. 171) defines Afrocentricity as “a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. The Afrocentric approach seeks in every situation the appropriate centrality of the African person”. To put it another way, Nobles (1985) as cited in Hill, 1995, p. 4) says:

Afrocentric, Africentric and African centred are interchangeable concepts representing the concept which categorize a quality of thought and practice which is rooted in the cultural image and interest of African people and which represents and reflects the life experiences, history and traditions of African people as the centre of analysis. It is therein, the intellectual and philosophical foundation which African people should create their own scientific criterion for authenticating human reality.

Afrocentricity and Africentricity are terms used to describe the cultural values of African peoples all over the world (Graham, 1999). Mbiti (1970) argues that there are common values shared by Africans throughout the continent and in the Diaspora. The Afrocentric paradigm seeks to overcome ontological, epistemological and methodological hegemony that is witnessed in most of the social sciences (Schreiber, 2000). Further, it seeks to minimize the hegemony of ethnocentric paradigms of human knowledge in attempts to accommodate more pluralistic paradigms (Graham, 1999). The philosophical foundations of the Afrocentric worldview lie in the history of classical African civilizations of Kemet, Nubia, Kush and Axum (Graham, 1999). For the purposes of this study looking at Black African learners in Pietermaritzburg schools, the use of the Afrocentric view is necessary because it speaks directly to Africans and their cultural heritage.

The principles and values that underpin the Afrocentric paradigm (Asante, 1987) are the following: the interconnectedness of all things, the spiritual nature of human beings, the collective identity and the inclusive nature of the family structure, the oneness of mind, body and spirit and the value of interpersonal relationships.

### *The Interconnectedness of All Things*

All beings in the universe, people, animals, plants and inanimate beings are interconnected and interdependent (Graham, 1999). This interconnectedness and interdependence also supposes oneness between all elements of the universe (Mbiti, 1970; Nobles, 1985). According to this view, human reality, which is unified, is only divided into parts because of human's limited knowledge (Graham, 1999). The human being through this interconnection is complete only when living harmoniously with the rest of his/her environment and community. Social problems in the community are often understood to stem from disharmony between beings. According to Akbar (1976) touching any element in the unified whole creates a vibration throughout the whole. The interconnectedness and interdependence between all elements in the universe for the African, gives them purpose and connects them to family and community (Graham, 1999). The maintenance of harmonious relationships between all elements plays a huge supporting role towards developing social competence and self esteem (Graham, 1999). Social problems are understood to be the result of disrupted relationships and connections between elements in the whole; in other words, when human beings are alienated from each other and their relationships severed, problems arise (Graham, 1999).

The spiritual and material realities are also interconnected (Graham, 1999). Myers (1988) puts this succinctly when she says "reality is at one and inseparably spiritual and material" (p. 24). This interconnectedness and oneness between human beings and all other beings in the universe also incorporates those who are not yet born and those who have passed away (Graham, 1999). Inherent human spirituality that transcends time and space and connection with God ensures that individuals are never isolated from their community (Graham, 1999). Responsible participation and commitment to the wellbeing of the community are the defining features of how personhood is understood in African thinking. Personhood is defined in relation to one's community (Mkhize, 2004). Community in African thinking is understood as an ongoing relationship between a people that share a common understanding of life and as such are committed to the well being of each of its parts.

It is not uncommon in African communities to hear a child referring to a neighbour as mother or father as it is the responsibility of all adults within the community to raise children who will later become responsible members of the community and vanguards of its wellbeing

(Mkhize, 1999). This understanding of personhood is better illustrated in the sayings: *Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu/ Motho ke motho ka batho*. This IsiZulu and Sesotho expression, translated, means a person is a person because of other persons. The person in this understanding is not an individual apart from other persons. In the indigenous African view, individual identity emerges from communion with others (Osagie, 1980). It is through being and participating in communal life with other beings that a person becomes a person. Personhood is a process in motion that is earned through responsible participation with others in the community for the betterment of the community (Menkiti, 1984; Ruch & Anyanwu, 1981). Cultural knowledge of self is the process that connects the spiritual person to other members of the community (Graham, 1999). Cultural self knowledge and authenticity is also necessary for the spiritual development and well being of the individual (Graham, 1999).

School violence and violence as earlier defined are human phenomena and behaviour that are in direct opposition to the value of interconnectedness that is so important in the Africentric paradigm. The extent of school violence in South African schools reflects disconnectedness by learners from themselves and other learners, victims and perpetrators. This rupture in relationships and alienation from aspects of self created by school violence create a disharmony within the school and the wider community. It is the responsibility of all members of the community and schools to redress the imbalance for the wellbeing of the community. Failure to do this has implications for how learners' identities can and are defined and their personhood attained, a problem that stretches beyond the boundaries of schools.

### *Spiritual Nature of Human Beings*

Spirituality is very central in the Afrocentric worldview (Dei, 1994). According to Schiele (1994), spirituality is the substance that connects all human beings and God. The spiritual nature of human beings requires them to value other human beings more than social or economic status (Graham, 1999). It is through the relationships that one has with other human beings and the community that one achieves personhood, which itself is a process that the individual has to go through, as mandated by cultural rituals and rites of passage (Graham, 1999). Hill (1992) has defined rites of passage as those cultural ceremonies and rituals that are used to guide mostly young people in finding meaning and purpose in their lives and existence in order to prepare them for the next stage in their lives. Writing from a British



context that he describes as racist towards the Black man, Graham (1999) mentions that African rites of passage, based on Afrocentric values, have been used with Black youth in Britain to help them find meaning and purpose in their lives, a process which is often hindered by racism.

African societies spiritualized their universe and endowed supernatural powers to those forces that threatened them (Mbiti, 1982; Peek, 1991). This was done in the hope that a connection with the supernatural world would make it easier to relate to the universe. All things in the natural world are imbued with spirits which give power and meaning to what the African does (Dei, 1994). For example, the colours worn during mourning (red and black amongst West Africans) provide spiritual, emotional and physical support for the bereaved. Africans believe that black colours absorb energy from the sun and this energy symbolically gives strength and support to the bereaved during times of pain and anguish (Dei, 1994).

Most Africans established communion with the spiritual world through the veneration of ancestors (Dei, 1994). This is based on the belief that there is a linkage between the world of the living and the dead. The ancestors, whom Mbiti (1970) refers to as the living-dead, guide and keep an eye on the behaviour of their living kith and kin. For people to be venerated as ancestors when they die they should have lived a good life and had been socially responsible (Dei, 1994).

This Afrocentric value also provides us with a useful way of understanding school violence in South Africa particularly when we consider the cultural difficulties that Black learners are faced with in secondary schools in South Africa. From the outset of formal education in South Africa systematic steps were taken to ensure that the culture and the beliefs of Black Africans were destroyed. Despite the political and ideological changes in schools since 1994, schools in South Africa still reflect colonial designs in culture and practice. This is the case in Township schools but more so in former Model C schools where Black learners still face cultural exclusion (Vally *et al.*, 2002). The consequences of spiritual and cultural denial and marginalisation have huge negative consequences particularly for learners' connectedness with others and communities.

### *The Collective Identity and the Inclusive Nature of the Family Structure*

According to this principle one cannot understand the person separately from other persons; a principle that is best illustrated in the African proverb “*I am because we are and because we are therefore I am*” (Mbiti, 1970, p. 141). This principle places emphasis on the similarities between people as opposed to their differences (Graham, 1999). Inherent in this principle is the idea that what happens to one individual happens to the community and what happens to the community happens to the individual (Mbiti, 1970). The collective identity principle, it must be noted, does not reject uniqueness (Akbar, 1984; Boykin, 1983; Boykin & Toms, 1985). Cook and Kono (1977) mention that in African Psychology the idea of the individual in opposition to the group is absent and replaced by a common understanding and goals. This philosophical assumption fosters in the psyche of the African a sense of belonging to a collective and a whole (Graham, 1999). Baldwin’s (1981) concept of the ‘African self consciousness’ also highlights the importance given to commonalities between the conditions of people as opposed to their individual differences. This talks to the need of the mutual interdependence between the individual and the community, as their wellbeing are intertwined.

The idea of collective identities has implications on the understanding of family structure in African communities (Graham, 1999). The family extends beyond one’s biological lineage; it incorporates other community members (T’Shaka, 1995). This conception of family is often confusing for those working with Africans and do not understand this extended concept of family. Children, according to the Afrocentric worldview, are raised by the entire community and not solely by their biological parents; children are considered very important in the existence and life of the community (Graham, 1999).

Judging from the interpersonal nature of violence in South African schools, this principle appears to be lacking within our schools and in how learners view each other. Huge emphases on differences as opposed to similarities that are typical of South Africa’s political and educational past in the form of Bantu Education continue today in the form of materialism (Burton, 2008). According to Schiele (1996), the youth commit violent acts because they live in a society that places materialism over any other forms of self worth. This legitimizes a disconnection of people from nonmaterial and morally affirming values about human self worth and the importance of social relationships. Due to this dislocation, recognition of a

shared humanity amongst peoples is diminished and people view one another as objects that can be harmed with little remorse. If learners saw in themselves other learners and their welfare a collective endeavour it is very unlikely that they would be witnessing the violence we are currently witnessing. Parenting according to this principle is the responsibility of all members of the young person's world including teachers. Violence perpetrated by teachers towards learners and learners towards teachers exemplifies the loss of connectedness and sense of responsibility and respect as articulated by the Afrocentric paradigm. It is possible that due to the levels of violence in South African schools to assume that the sense of belonging for all members of the school community is absent or diminished in South Africa schools.

### *The Oneness of Mind, Body and Spirit: The Value of Interpersonal Relationships*

According to this principle, there is no division between the mind, body and the spirit of the person (Graham, 1999). According to Weems (1974, p. 34), "to have a good body means that one has a good mind, and vice versa; one cannot exist without the other." All three are interrelated and equal (Mbiti, 1970) and their development is an indication of the human attempt to seek godliness through Ma'at (truth, justice, righteousness, harmony, balance, order, propriety, compassion, and reciprocity) within the self and through reaching a state of optimal health (Chissell, 1994). A state of optimal health is reached when there is optimal emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual health. According to King (1994), being in harmony with life is about living cooperatively with the forces of life and its experiences, whilst at the same time taking responsibility for one's actions and consciously making decisions about one's path in life. Balance between all the beings in the universe in the face of external forces and influences, is also important in the Afrocentric worldview. Disruption of this balance is understood to lead to compromised psychological, social and physical wellbeing (Graham, 1999). The value of interpersonal relationships lies in the appreciation and recognition of the other as a part of self. Good relationships between people must be maintained and protected for the optimal health of the self (Graham, 1999). Focus and value on interpersonal relationships highlights the human centred orientation to life by Africans (Schiele, 1990). Human bonds are considered more important than material possession and accumulation (Schiele, 1990).

The balance and health that are emphasised by this principle it would seem are also diminished in South African schools. Schools and learners are in a state of disequilibrium with themselves, each other and the schools that bring them together. As a result of this disequilibrium, learners' psychological, spiritual and emotional health are jeopardised which allow for an unhealthy violent situation to plague our schools and learners' sense wellbeing. Perpetration of violence by learners according to this principle is symptomatic of a lack of connectedness to each other and their schools as a whole.

Violence in South African schools as already discussed is reaching pandemic levels. The history of formal education in this country that brought with it the systematic marginalisation and obliteration of authentic African values and belief systems has contributed greatly to this condition. This section attempted to show how school violence in South Africa can be understood through the absence of an Afrocentric orientation. There have been attempts especially by Africans in the Diaspora to address this loss of African values and beliefs to remedy problems affecting Africans, and this exemplified in the principles of Nguzo Saba. These principles will be discussed in the following section and their value in our understanding of school violence in South African schools.

### **Afrocentricity and the Seven Principles of Nguzo Saba**

The seven Nguzo Saba principles, derived from the African worldview, are celebrated by African Americans during Kwanzaa. Although generally celebrated by Africans in the Diaspora the principles are very relevant to the South African context and it should be noted indeed that the festival of the first fruits is a common feature in many African communities including South Africa. Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Maulana Karenga (Johnson, 2001). The name 'Kwanzaa' originates from the KiSwahili phrase *matunda (fruits) ya kwanza (first)* which is a harvest celebration (Karenga, 1988). During the Kwanzaa celebration there are five values and practices of the first fruit celebration that are incorporated (Karenga, 1988). The first of these is gathering people, second is reverence for the creator and creation, the third is commemoration of the past, the fourth is recommitment to cultural ideals and finally celebration of the good (Karenga, 1988). This celebration originates as far back as Egypt and Nubia (Karenga, 1988).

The Nguzo Saba principles are based on the Kwaida theory (Johnson, 2001). At the core of the Kwaida theory is the idea that all thoughts and actions are based on tradition and reason (Karenga, 1988). Self determination and self definition are two concepts that are central to the Kwaida theory (Madhubuti, 1972). The Nguzo Saba principles are intended to reconnect Africans with their heritage and worldview (Johnson, 2001). These principles are: *Umoja* (Unity); *Kujichagulia* (Self-determination); *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility); *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics); *Nia* (Purpose); *Kuumba* (Creativity); and *Imani* (Faith) (Karenga, 1988).

*Umoja* emphasizes the need for Africans to strive for unity within their families and their communities. Schools being communities or rather communities within communities would also be expected to abide by this principle. As already mentioned, a contributor to the levels of violence in South African schools can be attributed to the historical disunity created by apartheid and Bantu Education and persisting today. Secondly, unity also speaks to the interconnectedness that is necessary for healthy learners and schools, a topic already discussed in the previous section on Afrocentric principles. The *Kujichagulia* principle emphasizes self determination in Africans in terms of naming, defining and creating themselves as Africans. In relation to the current study this principle has been interpreted to also refer to schools and their identity. Although the South African Schools Act of 1996 attempts to give ownership to all South Africans, there has been limited transformation as far as the values and ideals embodied in schools are concerned.

*Ujima* is a call for African communities to collectively work towards solving their problems. Collective problem-solving also speaks to relationships between learners and their schools. There have been calls from Burton (2008) and others that violence within South African schools should be dealt with collectively. The *Nia* principle places emphasis on the need for Africans to work together towards building and reclaiming their traditional greatness; it refers to a sense of purpose. Although celebrating multiculturalism and African-ness is encouraged by the South African Constitution of 1996 and the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a; Republic of South Africa, 1996b), sadly, with regards to Black learners reclaiming their African greatness guided by their schools, there is no evidence to support this. The *Kuumba* principle emphasizes the importance of participation by Africans in creative efforts that will enhance their communities.

There are many school violence interventions that have been used in South African schools some with limited reported success. None of the interventions have used a unique and creative Afrocentric model to guide them. The *Imani* principle emphasizes the need for Africans to believe in God, each other and their leaders and the righteousness of their struggles. The South African Constitution of 1996 and the South African Schools Act of 1996 also emphasise the importance of recognising the religious and other traditions of all South Africans (Republic of South Africa, 1996a; Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Whether this has translated into Black South African learners being encouraged to celebrate and practice their religious and traditional beliefs is debatable.

The Nguzo Saba principles taken together with other principles of the Afrocentric paradigm have for the most part been neglected from the South African schooling system. The South African Constitution of 1996 and the South Africans Schools Act of 1996 have despite their efforts not encouraged an African-centred schooling model that would benefit learners and Black learners in particular, given the historical marginalisation of their traditions and culture. Justification for an Afrocentric model in South African schools to curb the violence in schools is found in schools in the United States of America that have used this model to huge success (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997; Jagers *et al.*, 2007).

Asante (1991) and Woodson (1933) writing from an American (United States of America) context, the introduction of the Afrocentric idea into education is necessary for the psychological emancipation of Black learners. According to Woodson (1933), African-Americans have been mis-educated; that is, education devalues their histories and their cultures, placing them on the margins of European culture, and thus dislocating them from themselves. This consequently made African-American children to feel psychologically and intellectually inferior to their White peers whose cultures and histories are the centre of education in the United States of America. The Afrocentric idea in education would place Black children at the centre of education (Dei, 1994). This would enable the Black child to actively engage with what is taught and see themselves as participants in their education (Asante, 1991). These assertions regarding the education of African-American children by Woodson (1933), made over 80 years ago, remain true for many Black learners in South Africa, where education was legislated to meet the oppressive and marginalising agendas of the National Party.

Education that is not in line with their value systems, according to Cheatham and Berg-Cross (1992), limits Black learners' success and retards their psychological development. Johnson (2001) agrees with this and suggests the incorporation of the Nguzo Saba principles in the education of Black learners. These suggestions by Cheatham and Berg-Cross (1992) and Johnson (2001) amongst many others are consistent with Lomotey's (1992) observations regarding the success of the Independent Black Institutions (IBI). IBI's are primary and secondary schools in the United States of America which incorporate Afrocentric values and the Nguzo Saba principles. Moreover, Chambers, Kambon, Birdsong, Brown, Dixon, and Robbins-Brinson (1998), Kambon (1992) and Myers (1992) found that internalization of Africentric values by African Americans is a good indicator of their psychosocial adjustment. Likewise, Montgomery, Fine and James-Myers (1990) showed that students who adhered to Africentric values exhibited low levels of psychological distress.

Thomas *et al.* (2003) found that for African-American school children, Africentric values were associated with higher self-esteem which contributed greatly to positive psychosocial adjustment at school. Similarly, Belgrave *et al.* (1997) found that Afrocentric values led to negative attitudes towards drugs and alcohol which have been discussed as contributors for school violence among African-American youth. Flay *et al.* (2004) found that the Nguzo Saba principles reduced high risk behaviour with African-American youths. More relevant to this study, Jagers *et al.* (2007) found that adherence to the Nguzo Saba principles by African-American children served as deterrence for violence.

### **The Relationship between Attitudes and Violence**

In social psychology, there is a belief that attitudes are good predictors of behaviour, and as such can also be useful in modifying behaviour (Stahlberg & Frey, 1988). Campbell (1963) found 75 other concepts common to attitudes in psychological usage and they included the following: belief, value, habit, conviction, opinion, intuition, motive, set, personality trait and cognitive structure. There have since then been many different definitions of attitudes. Allport's definition of attitudes is one of the oldest and commonly used (Jaspers & Fraser, 1984).

Allport (1935) defined attitudes as follows:

An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. (p. 810)

Ajzen (1988) took a classical individualistic view in his definition of attitudes. In this view attitudes are hypothetical constructs which are inferred from verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Attitudes are evaluative in nature, learned/acquired and are regarded as stable, enduring dispositions of a person. Eiser and van der Pligt (1988) believe that attitudes do not exist in isolation in people's heads but are communicated through symbols and interactions between people. Meanings that attitudes have are culturally shared (Eiser & van der Pligt, 1988). In South Africa the culturally shared approach to attitudes has been the dominant one in research studies (Foster & Nel, 1991). This culturally shared understanding of attitudes is the one most consistent with this study and will be used in discussions around attitudes.

According to Megens and Weerman (2010) investigations into the role that attitudes play in determining behaviour is a wide and ambiguous one. Some of the hurdles towards reaching a conclusion on the attitude-behaviour relationship have arguably been influenced by the limitations of the theoretical positions that some researchers have chosen. For example, the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which contends that social pressure (subjective norm) together with attitudes contribute towards behaviour, has received very little empirical support. Likewise, Sutherland's Differential Association theory, delinquent behaviour is learnt through a person's interaction with others (Megens & Weerman, 2010). According to this theory, delinquent behaviour is a consequence of an abundance of available definitions (cognitions, attitudes, motivations and rationalisations) that are favourable to delinquency. This theory is weakened by its inability to address the delicate process of how and when attitudes translate into behaviour (Megens & Weerman, 2010). Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance theory, which suggests that attitudes and behaviour need to be in agreement or else there is cognitive tension, has also been very useful in how we understand the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. The major criticism with this theory however, is that there is no consensus regarding which one of the two, attitudes or behaviour, is adapted to achieve this balance or consistency (Megens & Weerman, 2010).

The shortcomings of the above-mentioned theories notwithstanding, a number of studies have shown that pro violence attitudes do affect behaviour (Engels, Luijpers, Landsheer and



Meeus, 2004, Megens & Weerman, 2010, Zhang, Loeber & Stouthamer- Loeber, 1997). Using a sample of male learners in Grades 1, 7 and 10 in the US, Zhang *et al.* (1997) investigated the attitude-behaviour relationship. Learners who had favourable attitudes towards delinquency and violence were more deviant than those with less favourable attitudes towards violence and delinquency. Zhang and colleagues found that the stronger attitude effect on behaviour was greater with learners aged 10-12 and tolerant attitudes towards violence increased linearly with violent behaviour for ages 6-17.

In another longitudinal study, Engels *et al.* (2004) were interested in the directionality and causality of the relationship between attitudes and delinquent behaviour. 550 school going adolescents from diverse ethnic backgrounds in schools in the Netherlands took part. It was found that attitudes influence behaviour more when adolescents are starting delinquency but for those who have been acting violently and delinquently, behaviour reinforces and influences attitudes. These findings would have been difficult to arrive at had the investigators not opted for a longitudinal research method which allowed them to follow these learners and eventually arrive at their conclusions.

Megens and Weerman (2010) used Social Identity theory as a framework to study delinquency. According to the Social Identity theory as interpreted by the Megens and Weerman (2010), identity formation, beliefs and attitudes are formed as a result of interactions between individuals and their significant others. Megan and Weerman (2010) found that secondary learners in the Netherlands with congruent attitudes (attitudes towards delinquency) and social norms (informed by endorsement from their peers) exhibited strong attitude-behaviour consistency. In other words, those adolescents with positive attitudes towards delinquency which are also endorsed by their significant peers were more likely to behave in delinquent ways. The findings from this study are very valuable for the current study because they emphasise the value of social ties in the formation of an individual's identity, beliefs and attitudes and the role that this plays in influencing behaviour.

The question pertaining to whether attitudes influence behaviour is very important for this study. The most obvious reason for this is that if positive attitudes towards violence lead to actual violent behaviour, long term interventions to curb school violence can be designed around changing these attitudes. Attitudes are shared products of a particular value system

and the Afrocentric paradigm with its communal and interdependent value system could have a lot to offer in influencing pro social attitudes and behaviour.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter outlined the violent history of education and schooling in South Africa. Attempts to use education to subjugate and marginalise the culture and values of Black South Africans, has been the most destructive achievement and contributor to school violence. Mainstream explanations for school violence, however enlightening, fall short when it comes to explaining school violence with Black South African learners. This is because these explanations ignore the role that history, politics and culture play. Afrocentric explanations centre the culture and history of Black Africans in any understanding of phenomena concerning them. In South Africa however, there have been very few attempts to use the Afrocentric paradigm to understand school violence as it relates to Black learners and interventions reflect this. Empirical evidence drawn especially from school going African-American youths suggests that Afrocentric values lead to negative attitudes towards violence and other anti-social behaviour. This has not been tested in South Africa. The current study sought to understand the relationship between an Afrocentric orientation and attitudes towards violence, in a sample of Black African school-going youth. The following chapter describes and discusses the study methodology.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology and the research design that was used in this study. This is followed by a discussion on sampling and a description of the participants. The instruments used in the study are described in detail. The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion on the ethical issues that were considered in the study and how the data was analysed.

### Research Design and Methodology

This was a quantitative correlational study. According to Firestone (1987) the quantitative method subscribes to the positivist paradigm that asserts that behaviour can be explained objectively. The purpose of the quantitative method is to explain social facts and their changes through measurements that are objective and analysis that is quantitative (Firestone, 1987). Quantitative purists of the likes of Ayer (1959), Maxwell and Delaney (2004), Popper (1959) and Schrag (1992) have argued that social phenomena like any other phenomena can and should be treated in the same way as physical scientists treat physical phenomena (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The quantitative methodology and its use of exploratory and correlational designs are meant to reduce error and other forms of bias that can compromise the validity of studies (Firestone, 1987). A correlational design is compatible with the quantitative methodology because the investigator is able to objectively measure two or more quantifiable variables (Gay & Airasian, 2000). A study such as this one which seeks to explore the nature and size of the relationship, if any, between Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence, can be best approached by using a quantitative correlational research design. Two instruments were used in this study, one to measure Afrocentric values and the other attitudes towards violence. The independent variables in the study are *Collective Work and Responsibility*, *Cooperative Economics*, *Self Determination*, as measured by the Children's Africentric Value Scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997), and gender. The dependent variable in the study was attitudes towards violence as measured by the Attitudes Towards violence scale (Funk *et al.*, 1999). Both these instruments are described below.

The qualitative research paradigm rejects positivism; it argues for interpretive and constructionist approaches to research (Johnson & Onwuegbusie, 2004). Those who subscribe to this school of thought believe that there exist multiple constructed realities and

that the knower and what can be known are inseparable as the knower too is a source of reality (Guba, 1990). Despite the importance of being able to explore multiple explanations for a given phenomena that qualitative methodologies make possible, for the purposes of this study which are to quantify and measure the relationship between two already defined and measurable concepts (Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence), it is inappropriate to use the qualitative methodology.

Johnson and Onwuegbusie (2004) have summarised some of the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative research. It was with careful consideration of these that a quantitative research design was chosen for this study. The first of these strengths, as discussed by Johnson and Onwuegbusie (2004), is that data collection can be quick. Due to the limited time to conduct this study this research method seemed to be the best suited for this population. Secondly, a quantitative research method has the advantage of being able to provide precise numerical data. Given the large number of violent acts in South African schools as already been shown in the NSVS study (Burton, 2008), numerical data, specifically measuring attitudes towards violence and Afrocentric values, seemed appropriate and complementary with the need for more data on violence in South African schools. Another strength of the quantitative research method is that it is useful when working with large groups. The large number and dispersion of Black school-going youth in the Pietermaritzburg area justified the use of a quantitative methodology. However there were some weaknesses associated with quantitative research that Johnson and Onwuegbusie (2004) identified that were also noted when choosing and using this method. The most relevant of these to this study was that it is a narrow research method that can miss other important information related to the phenomena under investigation. Measuring the correlation between Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence has the danger of missing other important variables affecting violent behaviour. Important as it is to explore all explanations of human phenomena, it is not always practical and methodological approaches such as the one used in this study seek only to explore and understand one area, to date a neglected one in South Africa.

### **Correlational Research Designs**

The following section will discuss the correlation research design. There are numerous considerations that an investigator using this design has to be aware of and adhere to in order to make sure that their study is methodologically sound, reliable and valid. The work of

Thompson, Diamond, McWilliam, Snyder and Snyder (2005) and Mitchell (1985), evaluating good correlation research designs, will be the main focus of this section.

According to Thompson *et al.* (2005), correlational studies are “quantitative, multi-subject designs in which participants have not been randomly assigned to treatment conditions” (p. 182). Analysis methods often used with these sorts of designs are multiple regression analysis, canonical correlation analysis, hierarchical linear modelling and structural equation modelling (Thompson *et al.*, 2005). One cannot infer causality between variables without true randomized trials and as such correlational designs cannot be used for such a purpose (Thompson *et al.*, 2005). Correlation evidence can however be used tentatively to inform causal inferences and in turn evidence based practice (Thompson *et al.*, 2005). This can be done statistically by testing alternative causal models as is possible with the use of analytic models such as the structural equation modelling (SEM) (Joreskog, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1978), using the computer program LISREL (analysis of Linear Structural Relationships) (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989) or by making use of logic and theory to rule out all possible alternative explanations.

Thompson *et al.* (2005) suggest four quality indicators for evaluating correlational research in attempts to inform evidence based practice. These four indicators include the following: measurement; practical and clinical significance; avoidance of common analytic mistakes and confidence intervals for score reliability coefficients, statistics and effect sizes.

The *measurement indicator* focuses on the psychometric forthrightness of the data that is analysed in order for the evidence to inform practice. Measurement considerations are conceptualised in terms of the score validity and score reliability. Reliability of scores refers to the internal coherence of the measures used as well as their consistency over time, while validity refers to whether the scores actually measure what they are supposed to measure (Thompson, 2003). Reliability is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for validity. Thompson *et al.* (2005) remind us that score validity of a measure can differ from one set of conditions to another, in other words, the same measure given to different respondents under different circumstances might not yield valid scores. This is also true for the reliability of a measure. To ensure that a correlational study meets the quality requirements on this indicator, it is important that reliability coefficients for all measured variables are reported. This can be induced from prior studies or test manuals provided that there is reasonable justification

based on comparable sample compositions and score dispersions. Secondly, score reliability coefficients for the particular study should be reported on all measured variables of that study. Thirdly, evidence and a rationale should be provided from a previous study or test manual that suggests that the scores are valid for the inferences to be made in the particular study. Score validity should be evaluated empirically based on data from the particular study. Finally, the influence of score validity and reliability should be seriously considered during the interpretation phase of the study.

Statistical significance is an estimate of probability for the sample results, provided that the sample size and sample are derived from the population described by the null hypothesis (Cohen, 1994; Thompson, 1996). *Practical significance* is an evaluation of the potential meaningfulness of the results from a study by quantifying the divergence of the study results from the null hypothesis (Snyder & Lawson, 1993). The quantification is referred to as effect size. *Clinical significance* is an evaluation of the extent to which intervention recipients in a study no longer meet the diagnostic criteria that made intervention with them appropriate (Jacobson, Roberts, Berns, & McGlinchey, 1999; Kendall, 1999). It is important to accurately and clearly report statistical significance values and effect size statistics to meet good quality correlational research requirements. Secondly, it is important for the researcher to consider the study design and the limitations of effect size as part of their effect interpretations.

The third quality indicator that Thompson *et al.* (2005) bring to our attention is being wary of and taking precautions against making particular mistakes when using correlational research designs. The first mistake has to do with the interpretation of general linear model weights such as beta weights and factor pattern coefficients. It is important to ensure that when the weights are correlation coefficients, they are interpreted as reflecting correlations of predictors of outcome variables. The second common mistake is forgetting to examine structure coefficients (correlations of measured variables with latent variables which are being explored) when meaningful results have been found and the origins of these effects explored. According to Courville and Thompson (2001) structure coefficients are important for the accurate interpretation of regression analysis and canonical correlation analysis (Thompson, 1984). The third mistake is converting interval scales into nominal scales without justification or consideration of the consequences for the interpretation of the results. The fourth mistake is not ensuring that univariate methods are not used when dealing with multiple outcome variables. The fifth mistake is not making sure that the assumptions of the

statistical method used in the study are explicitly and properly presented, failure to do so brings to question the credibility of the results.

The fourth quality indicator is confidence intervals for score reliability coefficients and statistics and effect size. Confidence intervals enable us to reject a null hypothesis, and reporting of them is very important for the reliability coefficients of a study. Confidence intervals should also be reported for the sample statistics such as means and correlation coefficients and also for the sample effect sizes. Finally confidence coefficients should be interpreted by direct comparison with other related studies and their confidence intervals.

According to Mitchell (1985) a lot a work has been done looking at evaluating experimental designs to the exclusion of correlational designs. Mitchell (1985) believes that some of the concepts developed by the likes of Cook and Campbell (1976, 1979) to evaluate experimental designs can be used to evaluate correlational research designs. These four concepts will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first of these concepts is *internal validity*. The concept of *internal validity* addresses the question: does the experimental treatment (variable A) have an effect (variable B) (Mitchell, 1985). The presence of *internal validity* enables us to rule out the possibility of other explanations for the relationship between variable A and B. The second concept is construct validity. *Construct validity* is concerned with threat(s) to internal validity that are not possible alternative explanations for the relationship between variables A and B but rather possible substitutes for either one of the variables. Where there is no *construct validity* there is the possibility of contamination and or deficiency. Contamination is variance in the measure that is missing in the construct. Deficiency refers to variance in the construct that has not been captured by the measure (Schwab, 1980). In order to rule out alternative explanations Mitchell (1985) mentions that it is important to check possible design flaws which lead to internal validity and conceptual/measurement flaws which lead to *construct validity*. To ensure internal and construct validity in correlation research, the investigator should rule out the existence of possible unexpected alternative variables and ensure that there is no conceptually similar variable for either one of the original variables that can explain a particular correlation. Through proper measurement and preparation of studies Mitchell (1985) argues that alternative variables and confounding constructs can be ruled out.

*Statistical conclusion validity* is the third concept dealing with evaluating correlational designs. *Statistical conclusion validity* is concerned with instability in as much as it refers to the unreliability of measures, changes in sampling of persons and measures, and instability of repeated measures (Mitchell, 1985). Testing for *statistical conclusion validity* is concerned with identification of the sources of random error variance and the appropriate use of statistics and statistical tests. The problem with unreliable measures as addressed by *statistical conclusion validity* is that they can lead to inaccurate inferences being made. Because *statistical conclusion validity* is concerned with reliability, stability and other factors that can hinder the statistical analysis, when doing correlational research it is important to report the type of reliability and reliability of the measure being used in order to ensure *statistical conclusion validity* (Mitchell, 1985).

A second requirement to meet *statistical conclusion validity* would be to ensure that through sampling of respondents necessary steps are taken to reduce huge differences in measure scores between respondents and non-respondents. Thirdly, cross-validation with a separate sample may be useful to deal with regression coefficient shrinkage that often occurs with unreliable measures during regression analysis which can have an effect on *statistical conclusion validity*. Finally, ensuring *statistical conclusion validity* should entail checking that significance of variables that occurs by chance due to the number of tests used in a particular study does not go unchecked. *External validity* refers to how inferences made in one experiment can be generalised to other persons and conditions (Cook & Campbell, 1976). Mitchell (1985) mentions that it is hard when using correlational designs to ensure external validity as the samples are not randomly selected. The various considerations as reported above were addressed in the study; they are reported in the sections below as well as in the results chapter.

## **Sampling**

This section will describe how sampling of participants in the study was done and offer a justification for the choice given that numerous sampling methods are available for studies similar to this one. De Jongh (1990) defines a sample as “a model of the population or a subset of the population that is to be used to gain information about the entire population” (p. 46). A population can be defined as the entire list of cases that the study is interested in (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 1989). According to Monette *et al.* (1989, p. 132), a



representative sample is one that “accurately reflects the distribution of relevant variables in the target population”. The sampling frame for this study was Sobantu, Imbali, Northdale, Pietermaritzburg city centre and Scottsville, targeting in particular the senior secondary, school-going youth in these communities.

The first step in sampling is to decide what population one plans to study and according to Kish (1965) selection of the population should be based on four important factors: content, units, extent and time. *Content* refers to a particular common characteristic that all members of the interest population have in common. Participants in this study were Black, 18 years or older, in Grade 11 and 12 and went to schools in one of the five Pietermaritzburg residential areas mentioned above. The *unit or the unit of analysis* refers to whom or what the study is interested in investigating—individuals, groups or organisations. This study was interested in Black learners attending school in the Pietermaritzburg area. *Extent* refers to the geographical coverage of the study. Sobantu, Imbali, Northdale, Pietermaritzburg city centre and Scottsville were the five areas in Pietermaritzburg that made up the geographical coverage of the study. *Time* refers to the period in which the units possess the characteristics that qualify them for participation in the study. Black Grade 11 and 12 learners in Pietermaritzburg who were 18 years old or older at the time of the study were able to participate.

There are three major issues regarding sampling that one needs to address when designing a study and they are the following: defining the population that one hopes to study; selection of a sampling method that minimises bias, and taking precautions to ensure that the sample statistics are precise enough for purpose of the study (De Jongh, 1990). All of these issues were addressed in the design of this study. The first of these, defining the population, has already been discussed in the previous paragraph, Black Grade 11 and 12 learners attending secondary schools in identified five areas in Pietermaritzburg who are 18 years old and older. The second and third issue were addressed in the current study by ensuring that a large enough sample that met the appropriate demographics of the study were given an equal chance to participate in the study through the use of a suitable sampling method. The sampling method used in the study was the convenience sampling method and will be described in the following paragraphs. A large amount of error can often be traced to how well the sampling of the study was done, in other words how well the three issues discussed above were addressed (De Jongh, 1990). How well the sample represents the larger

population of interest is also determined by how well the above sampling issues are addressed (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

Sampling plays a vital role in the statistical validity of a study especially when looking at the existence of relationships and covariations (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The statistical validity of the study is to a large degree also determined by the sample size of the study (De Jongh, 1990). For instance a small sample size may lead the researcher to not rejecting a null hypothesis when it is false. In this study a large enough sample was used in order to reduce the possibility of statistically invalid results.

Before we describe the particular sampling method used in this study it is useful to briefly review the other available sampling methods, this is important because it gives perspective on why the chosen method was judged to be the most appropriate. Probability sampling is sampling that through its deliberate randomness increases the chances of most members of an interest population being included in sample for the study (Bryman, 2001). This type of sampling is deliberately structured to reduce researcher bias in the selection process of the population sample. Examples of random probability sampling are simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling (Monette *et al.*, 1989). Probability sampling enables the researcher to calculate sampling error which can be defined as the degree to which the sample differs from the rest of population of interest (Monette *et al.*, 1989). This is important because the researcher then has a good idea of how representative their sample is.

Non probability sampling is less structured than probability sampling and incorporates human judgement in the sample selection process (De Jongh, 1990). There are six types of non probability sampling designs (Henry, 1990). The first is convenience/availability sampling. With this sampling method cases are selected based on their availability. The second is most similar/dissimilar cases. According to this method cases are selected based on their believed similarity or dissimilarity with the conditions of interest. The third design is the typical cases. Cases using this design are selected based on their known usefulness and lack of extremity. The fourth design is the critical cases design. Only the essential and key cases for what is being investigated are selected for the sample. The fifth design is the snowball design. With this design sample members that have already been judged to be appropriate for the study recommend to the researcher other similar cases known to them. The sixth design is the quota

design. With this method researchers select a representative sample for the study based on readily identifiable characteristics. Non probability sampling often makes the results of the study hard to generalise because they usually reflect the views of a restricted sample.

To minimize error variance, it would have been ideal to use probability sampling in the current study. However, due to time constraints, non probability convenience sampling was employed. Convenience sampling was found to be useful because the investigator in the current study had easier access to Grade 11 and 12 learners who were 18 years old and older who went to schools in Imbali, Sobantu, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg city centre and Northdale.

## Participants

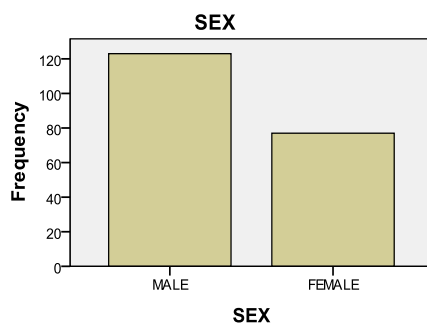


Figure 1: Participants by sex

All the participants in this study were Black learners in Pietermaritzburg secondary schools. There were 200 participants in this study. 123 of the participants were male and 77 were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 years old to 23 years old. The mean age was 18.95 (SD= 1.19). 100 of the participants were 18 years old (50%), 47 participants were 19 years old (23.5%), 25 participants were 20 years old (12.5%), 20 participants were 21 years old (10%), 7 participants were 22 years old (3.5%) and one participant was 23 years old (.5%).

36 of the participants were in grade 11 and 164 in grade 12. 48 (24%) of the participants were from schools in Imbali Township, 28 (14%) from Sobantu Township, 7 (3.5%) from Scottsville suburb, 36 (18%) from Northdale and 81 (40.5%) from schools in Pietermaritzburg city centre.

The city of Pietermaritzburg falls within the boundaries of the Msunduzi municipality and is the capital city of KwaZulu Natal (Piper, 2010). The population according to the 2001 census is 553223 (Piper, 2010). Approximately 76.8% of the population is Black (Lemon, 2005). The second largest racial group living in Pietermaritzburg is Indians who make up 11.7% of the population, Whites 8,1% and Coloureds 3,3% (Lemon, 2005).

Imbali and Sobantu are both predominantly Black townships with few or absolutely no other racial groups living there (Piper, 2010). Scottsville is a predominantly White suburb while Northdale is predominantly Indian (Piper, 2010). Despite the movement of many Black learners to better resourced White or former Model C schools in White suburbs (Scottsville) and Indian (Northdale) and Coloured schools in Indian and Coloured suburbs since the early 1990s (Lemon, 2005), the Black townships schools have remained completely Black and vastly poorer than their White, Coloured and Indian counterparts (Lemon, 2005).

## **Instruments**

In this study self report questionnaires measuring Afrocentric values using the Children's Africentric value scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for adolescents (Funk *et al.*, 1999) were administered to Black high school learners in Pietermaritzburg (KwaZulu Natal). Measurement of Afrocentric values using the Children's Africentric Value Scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) has been done in numerous studies in the United States of America but not in South Africa. The role of attitudes in affecting behaviour is also well documented but Black attitudes with specific focus on attitudes towards violence in South Africa have not been measured, and even more worryingly, Black learners' attitudes towards violence. So, based on the knowledge that Black people have a unique perspective on reality and themselves (Nobles, 1985), share certain values and beliefs, evidence of violence as a social phenomena that is rife in South African schools (Burton, 2008), our knowledge about the relationship between values and attitudes and knowledge that attitudes influence behaviour, it would seem imperative that to deepen our understanding of this violence in schools, attitudes towards violence and Afrocentric values be measured using instruments that have been proven to do this effectively (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997; Belgrave, Brome, & Hampton, 2000).

Self report measures are considered to be relatively accurate depending on whether or not respondents have compelling reasons to hide their true feelings (Eiser & van der Pligt, 1988) and guaranteeing of anonymity validates self report data (Mueller, 1986). In this study participants were told that their responses would remain anonymous and because the questions in the questionnaires were not believed to be sensitive, there was no reason not to treat the responses of participants as reliable and valid.

### **The Children's Africentric Value Scale**

The Children's Africentric Value Scale (CAVS) was designed to measure Afrocentricity in African-American children (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997). This scale was chosen for Africans in this study because the values it measures are derived from the seven Nguzo Saba principles (Karenga, 1988). This scale is made up of 9 items. Pilot testing and two revisions of the scale took place before the 9 items were eventually selected to make up the final scale.

There were initially 30 items that were included in the scale. These items were intended to correspond with the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba (Karenga, 1977). The Nguzo Saba principles are unity, self determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. The content validity of the 30 items was determined by recognised experts of the Nguzo Saba principles (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997). When consensus between the experts was not met on the correspondence of the items with the principles of the Nguzo Saba they were deleted. This process led to 15 items being retained.

Factor analysis was done of these 15 items and this revealed 3 distinct factors (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997). The first factor was *Collective Work and Responsibility*, the second was *Cooperative Economics* and the third factor was *Self Determination*. Items with a loading greater than .50 on each factor were retained in the final scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997). The Cronbach reliability coefficient for the scale is .65 (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997). This measure was intended for African-Americans but for the purposes of this study it will be adapted for Africans. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in this study is 0.69.

*Collective Work and Responsibility* refers to the belief that African-Americans have a responsibility to look after one another and to work together in order to improve their lives and those of their communities (Karenga, 1977). Two examples of this subscale are

“Decisions should be based on what will benefit everyone and not just a few people” and “Families, schools, and the community should work together to improve themselves”.

The second factor which is *Cooperative Economics* refers to the belief that resources should be shared and maintained within the African-American community (Karenga, 1977). This factor includes the following two items: “When possible, Black people should spend their money in Black owned stores and shops” and “Black people should start their own businesses and employ their own people to work in them”.

The third factor, *Self Determination*, is an indication of the belief that African-Americans should decide what is best for themselves, their families and their communities (Karenga, 1977). This factor includes the following 2 items which are “Black people should be able to make decisions for their own people” and “Black people should not let anyone stop them from achieving their goals”.

A likert-type scale was used with each of these items, 1 for “agree” 2 for “disagree” and 3 for “not sure”. A low score which would be in the range of 1 to 12 would therefore represent strong endorsement of Africentric values and a high score ranging from 20 to 27 would represent weak endorsement of Africentric values. This measure was used in a study by Belgrave *et al.*, (1997) and their study looking at the protective role that an Afrocentric worldview and its values have against drug usage with 189 African-American youths. They found that having Afrocentric values were negatively correlated with drug usage and attitudes towards drug usage. Another study using this measure by Belgrave *et al.* (2000) looking at the prediction of drug use, drug knowledge and drug attitudes with 195 African American youth in the US found that Africentric values were a significant predictor of drug knowledge. A third study using this measure this time looking at the influence of Afrocentric values and pro social adjustment of 104 fourth grade African American school children by Thomas *et al.* (2003), found that high levels of Afrocentric values by the children contributed to high levels of self esteem and low classroom behavioural problems.

### **Attitudes Towards Violence scale: A Measure for Adolescents**

This scale was designed to measure the impact of various violence prevention programs given the levels of incidence and lethality of youth violence (Funk *et al.*, 1999). Items for this

scale were developed based on information about factors that contribute to juvenile violence. The items that were chosen were believed to reflect attitudes with strong links to violent behaviour (Osofsky, 1997; Tolan, Guerra, & Kendall, 1995; Velicer, Huckel, & Hansen, 1989).

The original version of the scale had 10 statements about possible responses to violence (e.g., “If a person hits you, you should hit them back”). The statements were rated on a five point scale with 1 for “strongly disagree” and 5 for “strongly agree” by 157 junior high school students (USA) and 254 high school students from the same school. The Cronbach’s alpha for this version was .75 for both groups (junior high school and high school). The wording of the statements was simplified for items with marginal contribution to internal consistency and new items were included resulting in a 14 item scale. This scale was administered with 124 high school students in the US and had an internal reliability of .71 (Funk *et al.*, 1999).

The 14 item scale was further modified and some items were dropped based on their contribution to scale reliability and additional items were written resulting in a 17 item scale. This second version of the scale is based on 519 questionnaires that were administered to junior high school students and 774 questionnaires that were administered to high school students (USA), some from the pre intervention samples and others from the post intervention samples. Analysis on this group revealed a Cronbach’s alpha of .85. Following this analysis two items were dropped because of their low contribution to internal consistency resulting in the final scale having 15 items with internal reliability of .86. This 15 item scale is the one that was used in this study. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale in this study is 0.65.

The 15 item scale that was used in this study was first administered with 1266 junior and high school students at an inner city school in an undisclosed Midwestern city in the USA. A separate principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was done separately for the junior and high school students. The results of this were comparable and so the groups were combined. An unrotated one factor solution revealed a strong general factor labelled *Total Proviolence Attitudes* with a reliability of .86. Based on a scree plot, interpretability and internal reliability a two factor solution was found to be more superior. Factor 1 was labelled “*Culture of Violence*” (Cronbach’s alpha=.75) and factor 2 was labelled “*Reactive Violence*” (Cronbach’s alpha=.80).

The statements relating to the *Culture of Violence* reflect identification with violence as a valued activity and *Reactive Violence* statements justify the use of violence as a response to actual or perceived threats. Two examples of the items reflecting a *Culture of Violence* are “I could see myself committing a violent crime in 5 years” and “It’s okay to use violence to get what you want”. Two examples of items reflecting *Reactive Violence* are “If a person hits you, you should hit them back” and “It’s okay to do whatever it takes to protect yourself”. Scores that range between 56 and 75 indicate high pro violence attitudes, scores ranging between 38 and 45 indicate medium pro violence attitudes and scores ranging between 1 and 37 indicate low pro violence attitudes.

### **Data collection**

Data were collected using the Children’s Africentric value scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and the Attitudes Towards Violence scale: A Measure for adolescents (Funk *et al.*, 1999). Participants were asked to complete both of these questionnaires one after the other. Data were collected in places where there was a large congregation of high school youth above 18 years old, such as the Pietermaritzburg taxi rank and the town library. The emphasis was not so much on the schools the youth attended, though it is possible that the special circumstances of the schools, their violence prevention programmes if any, for example, could have an impact on the results. The problem associated with analysing intact samples, or in this case, the failure to exploit this is a variable on its own, is discussed under the limitations section of the final chapter.

Research assistants were used to assist in collecting data in this study. All participants were told that only those learners who were 18 years old and older and were in Grade 11 or 12 from the five already mentioned areas in Pietermaritzburg could participate in the study. Participants were told about the objectives of the study, reminded that participation was voluntary and told that all information gathered would be treated as confidential and access restricted to the principal researcher and his supervisor.

Participants were asked to read and if they agreed with the conditions of the study and participation to sign the Informed consent form before completing the questionnaires (Appendix A). Consent forms asked participants to write their names/pseudonyms, age, grade, name of school (for verification purposes only) and most importantly indicated to



participants that participation was voluntary. Once the participants had completed and signed the consent forms participants were given both questionnaires and asked to complete them alone (without assistance from other people). The questionnaires were in English and participants were instructed to complete them one after the other with no specific instructions on which to complete first. Once the questionnaires had been completed they were returned to the research assistants.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Whenever research is done working with people, it is important that the necessary ethical guidelines and considerations are adhered to in order to ensure that all participants are protected and respected. In this study with high school learners ethical considerations were very important and formed a vital part in the design of the study.

According to Emanuel, Wendler, and Grady (2000), for the past 50 years the main ethical guidelines have come from the Nuremberg Code (Nuremberg Code, 1996), the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 1997), the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research, 1979 ) and the International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects (The Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences, 1993). Each of these was in response to particular incidents or scandals (Emanuel *et al.*, 2000) and were improvements on previous guidelines (Levine, 1996). For the purposes of this study a brief review and consideration of these different guidelines was done to ensure that where relevant no ethical boundaries as in the past were crossed and to ensure the protection of the participants in this study.

The Nuremberg Code emerged as a part of a judicial condemnation of atrocities by Nazi physicians and focused on participant consent and a favourable risk benefit ratio in clinical research (Emanuel *et al.*, 2000). The research scandals of Tuskegee and Willowbrook which led to the development of the Belmont Report also reiterated the importance of informed consent. The Declaration of Helsinki like the Nuremberg Code emphasised the need for research to have a favourable risk benefit ratio for the participants, independent review of studies, and outlined the ethical guidelines for doing research with patients (Emanuel *et al.*, 2000). The Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) guidelines focused on applying the Declaration of Helsinki in developing countries especially with drug

trials. The CIOMS emphasised the need to compensate research participants for any injuries incurred during a study (Emanuel *et al.*, 2000). During this study the researcher and the research assistants made sure that participants were well aware of what their participation in the study would entail and had to read and sign an Informed Consent form acknowledging that they understood what the study intended to accomplish and the voluntary nature of their participation. The risk benefit ratio of the study was deemed to lean towards the welfare of the learners/participants but learners were told that counselling would be made available to them should they have been victims of violence. The issue of informed consent in the current study will be dealt with in more detail later on in this section.

Emanuel *et al.* (2000) recommend seven ethical requirements that they believe are consistent with the philosophical intentions of many of the ethical guidelines including the ones mentioned above. These seven ethical requirements were followed strictly in the design and conduct of this study and will be discussed below.

The first of these requirements is social value. Research must result in some value for people, for example better health or wellbeing. Studies that are not implementable are according to this requirement neither valuable nor ethical. The current study was intended to offer an understanding on the relationship between Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence with Black learners in schools in Pietermaritzburg, an understanding that could possibly help in designing future youth and community violence prevention interventions that could help many young people by reducing violence in their schools and communities.

The second requirement is scientific validity. The requirement calls for studies to be methodologically sound to be regarded as ethical. The objectives of the study must be clear, the design principles and methods be reliable and be able to test the objectives of the study. The current study adhered to widely accepted research methods and processes that addressed the objectives of the study and were judged to be so by the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The methodological process was regularly revisited and reviewed throughout the duration of the study to ensure that it remained sound and consistent with the objectives of the study.

The third requirement by Emanuel *et al.* (2000) is fair subject selection. Selection of participants must be proven to address the scientific goals of the study to be fair. Only sound

scientific reasoning can justify the disqualification of participants from the study. Subjects should be selected in a manner that together with being in line with scientific goals will also reduce the risk for participants and enhances benefits. Non probability convenience sampling was used in this study; this as earlier discussed was because it is the scientifically accepted method of sampling when one takes advantage of the accessibility and availability of the population of interest as was the case in this study.

The fourth requirement is favourable risk benefit ratio. This requirement highlights the need for clinical studies to minimise risk for participants and increase the benefits: benefits should always outweigh the risks. Extraneous benefits like money are not included in this definition of benefits as increasing how much one pays participants will not necessarily reduce the risk that the study poses (Emanuel *et al.*, 2000). There were no risks identified for participants in this study but participants were made aware that counselling would be made available for them should they need it. The benefits of participating in the study as were mentioned to participants were that this study could help in the development of violence interventions that could help make schools safer.

Independent review is the fifth requirement. This requirement deals with the possible conflicts that a researcher may face that could lead to them resorting to unethical behaviour like making use of poor scientific methods when conducting research. This requirement also refers to the oversight role of an Independent Ethics Review Committee that ensures that all studies adhere to acceptable research ethical standards. Independent reviewer(s) can help ensure that scientific rigour and principles are not clouded by researcher interests (Emanuel *et al.*, 2000). This was a supervised study by an experienced researcher. This supervision ensured that the scientific rigour of the study was monitored and maintained throughout the duration of the study and that the researcher remained objective at all times. The Ethics Review Committee at the University of KwaZulu Natal whose responsibility it is to ensure that all research done by registered students is ethical, also deemed this study to be ethical.

Informed consent is the sixth requirement. Informed consent is about ensuring that participants only participate in studies because they choose to, having been given all the necessary information regarding the objectives, purpose, risks and benefits of participating the study. This is consistent with McCarthy's (1991) reflections on informed consent prepared by the Steering Committee for the Development of International Guidelines for

Epidemiological Research and Ethical Review Procedures sponsored by the World Health Organisation and CIOMS. Participant autonomy is necessary to ensure informed consent. Participants' interests and values are other elements that are important in ensuring that informed consent is met. All participants in this study were 18 years old and older and were deemed to be able to understand and take autonomous decisions about their lives. Participants were told that participation was voluntary. Participants were told of the aims of the study and its objectives before participating. All of the aims and objectives of the study as well as the voluntary nature of their participation were written on the Informed consent form. Participants were asked to read and sign Informed consent forms before participation and reminded that they could opt out of the study at any point if they felt uncomfortable. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the informed consent form.

Respect for potential and enrolled subjects is the seventh requirement. This requirement emphasises the need for respect for all individuals that have been involved in the study, as possible participants and for some as participants in the study. Privacy and confidentiality rules should be exercised with the information that participants offer. Participants should be afforded the opportunity to withdraw from a study at any point without fear of being penalised. All the learners that were approached but chose not to participate in the study and those who chose to participate were treated with respect. Confidentiality and privacy of all information gathered from the participants was discussed with them all and were included as clauses on the informed consent form. All information gathered from participants is kept in a safe place and accessible only to the researcher and his supervisor.

### **Data Analysis**

The data in this study went through two analysis processes. The first of these was a correlation analysis and the second was a multiple regression. Data analysis was done using SPSS. The study had two independent variables which were Africentric orientation (*Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics and Self Determination*) and gender. There was one dependent variable, attitudes towards violence, which was composed of two factors namely *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence*.

The first step of the analysis was to numerically code each of the possible responses to questions on both questionnaires on SPSS. The second step of the data analysis process was to enter each participant's responses to both questionnaires into SPSS. Once all the responses

had been entered into SPSS a correlation was run between overall attitudes towards violence and Afrocentric values.

Once the correlation analysis had been done and relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable identified the next step was to conduct a multiple regression. Multiple regression is an analysis technique that allows one to quantify the influence of numerous factors on a single dependent variable (Howell, 2002). In this study there were two dependent variables that were treated separately during the analysis; the one is *Culture of Violence* and the other *Reactive Violence*. A multiple regression allowed us to determine how much each of the independent variable(s) contributed towards attitudes towards violence and to which factor specifically i.e. *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence*.

This chapter has provided a detailed description and motivation for the correlational design that was used in this study. This was accompanied by a description of the participants who took part in the study and why convenience sampling was judged to be appropriate in this study. The Children's Africentric Value Scale and the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale were instruments that were used to measure Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence and SPSS was used to run correlations between Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence of Black learners in Pietermaritzburg. All ethical considerations as discussed by Emanuel *et al.* (2000) were adequately addressed and monitored throughout the duration of the study. The following chapter will look at the results from the study.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the study findings and the assumptions of correlation studies such as this one. There was no correlation between Africentric values as measured by the Children's Africentric Value Scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence* as measured by the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale (Funk *et al.*, 1999). Gender was the only variable that contributed towards *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence*.

The assumptions of correlation studies include the following:

1. *Interval level data*- This is the assumption with Pearsonian correlations as was the case in this study.
2. *Linear relationships*-This refers to the graphical relationship wherein the two variables being investigated are better represented in a straight line than a curved one.
3. *Homoscedasticity*-This assumption relates to the error variance being the same at all points along the linear relationship.
4. *No outliers*-According to this assumption, one needs to be aware of the role that outliers can have on the overall correlation being investigated.
5. *Minimal measurement of error*-This assumption is made on the basis that low reliability can assuage correlation coefficients and one must be aware of this.
6. *Unrestricted variance*-This assumption addresses the issue that if variance is restricted for one or both variables due poor sampling or any other problem, the correlation coefficient can also be attenuated.
7. *Similar underlying distributions*-This assumption is useful for the purpose of assessing the strength of a correlation.
8. *Common underlying normal distributions*- This assumption is useful for the purpose of assessing the significance of a correlation when present.
9. *Normally distributed error terms*-This assumption relates to importance of the central limit theorem even in correlation studies (Garson, 1998).

### **Descriptive Statistics: Africentricity and Violence Measures**

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics obtained from the measures used in the study. For the Africentricity variables, as measured by the Children's Africentric Value Scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997), the mean score for *Collective Work and Responsibility* was 5.7 (SD=1.48).

*Cooperative Economics* yielded a mean score of 4.05 (SD=1.56), while *Self Determination* obtained a mean score of 2.74 (SD=0.96). As far as the attitudes towards violence were concerned, the mean for the *Culture of Violence* subscale was 14.31 (SD=5.09), while *Reactive Violence* obtained a mean score of 20.5 (SD=5.83).

**Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations: Violence Variables and Africentric measures**

	Culture of Violence	Reactive Violence	Collective work & responsibility	Cooperative Economics	Self determination
N	198	191	199	200	198
Mean	14.31	20.5	5.69	4.05	2.74
SD	5.09	5.83	1.48	1.56	0.96
Min	7	8	5	2	2
Max	35	35	15	6	6

### Gender Effects

Means and standard deviations by gender for both measures are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations by Gender: Africentric Values**

	<i>Collective Work and Responsibility</i>		<i>Cooperative Economics</i>		<i>Self Determination</i>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
N	122	77	123	77	122	76
Mean	5.75	5.60	4.21	3.80	2.78	2.66
SD	1.50	1.44	1.45	1.70	0.95	0.96

**Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations by Gender: Violence Variables**

	<i>Culture of Violence</i>		<i>Reactive Violence</i>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
N	121	77	119	72
Mean	14.97	13.28	22.02	17.99
SD	4.87	5.27	5.49	5.54

A MANOVA was run to determine if there were statistically significant differences between males and females on both the Africentricity and Violence measures. An omnibus test of the

null hypothesis showed that overall, there was a statistically significant gender effect ( $F_{2, 185} = 12.46, p = 0.00$ ) with Violence measures. No statistically significant gender effect was observed for the Afrocentricity measures.

As indicated in Tables 4 and 5, follow up tests using univariate F tests showed that there were statistically significant gender differences for the *Culture of Violence* ( $F(1, 186) = 4.92; p = .03$ ) as well as the *Reactive Violence* ( $F(1, 186) = 24.51; p = .00$ ).

**Table 4: Culture of violence Univariate Tests**

	SS	DF	Mean Square	F.	p	Eta Squared	Power
Culture of Violence	116.23	1	116.23	4.92	.03	.03	.59
Error (Within)	4390.91	186	23.61				

**Table 5: Reactive Violence Univariate Tests**

	SS	DF	Mean Square	F.	p	Eta Squared	Power
Reactive Violence	743.67	1	743.67	24.51	.00	.12	.99
Error (Within)	5644.20	186	30.35				

### Correlations between Africentricity and Attitudes Towards Violence

Table 6 presents the correlations between *Collective Work and Responsibility*, *Cooperative Economics*, *Self Determination*, *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence*.

**Table 6: Correlation matrix: Africentric values and violence variables**

	Collective Work & Responsibility	Cooperative Economics	Self Determination	Culture of Violence	Reactive Violence
1	1	.24*	.42*	.05	.01
2		1	.45*	.06	.13
3			1	.01	-.01
4				1	.59*
5					1

\*= $p < 0.01$



There is a statistically significant relationship between *Collective Work and Responsibility* and *Cooperative Economics* ( $r = .24, p = .001$ ). This means that learners who believed that communities should work together and share responsibility for solving community and family problems were likely to also believe that community resources should be shared and looked after by all community members.

A positive correlation between *Collective Work and Responsibility* and *Self Determination* ( $r = .42, p = .000$ ) means that learners who believed that people should work together communally to solve problems were likely to endorse the view that Black communities should take active roles in making decisions concerning their communities and families.

*Cooperative Economics* and *Self Determination* were also positively correlated ( $r = .45, p = .000$ ). This indicates that learners who endorsed the view that community resources should be shared and looked after by community members were also likely to endorse being actively engaged in taking decisions regarding their communities.

The positive correlation between *Culture of Violence* and *Reactive Violence* ( $r = .59, p > .000$ ) means that the two violence variables are related: the higher the Culture of Violence score, the higher the Reactive Violence.

### **Predictors of Culture of Violence**

To determine the best predictors of the *Culture of Violence*, an enter method regression analysis was performed with gender, age, *Collective Work and Responsibility*, *Cooperative Economics* and *Self Determination* as the predictor variables. Table 7 below presents the results of the omnibus test of the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the said predictor variables and the criterion variable, *Culture of Violence* ( $F_{5, 194} = 1.28, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the *Culture of Violence* cannot be predicted by the Africentric values as measured by this scale.

**Table 7: Regression model: Culture of violence**

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	p	Adjusted R Square
<b>Regression</b>	164.99	5	32.99	1.28	.27	.007
<b>Residual</b>	4869.89	189	25.77			
<b>Total</b>	5034.87	194				

**Predictors of Reactive Violence**

The variables gender, *Collective Work and Responsibility*, *Cooperative Economics* and *Self Determination* were entered into an enter method regression equation to predict the criterion variable, *Reactive Violence*. The results of this analysis, shown in Table 8, indicates a statistically significant analysis ( $F_{5, 187} = 5.23, p = .000$ ).

**Table 8: Regression model: Reactive Violence**

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F.	p.	Adjusted R Square
<b>Regression</b>	786.81	5	157.36	5.23	.000	.102
<b>Residual</b>	5475.92	182	30.09			
<b>Total</b>	6262.74	187				

Table 9 below shows that gender is associated with the *Reactive Violence*. Table 9 shows that gender is the only statistically significant predictor of *Reactive Violence* ( $\text{Beta} = -.33, t = -4.75, p = .00$ ).

**Table 9: Predictors of Reactive Violence**

Source	Beta	t	p
Gender	-.33	-4.75	.00
Age	-.08	-1.16	.25
Collective Work & Responsibility	-.00	-.04	.97
Cooperative Economics	.09	1.18	.24
Self Determination	-.07	-.83	.41

**Conclusion**

The chapter presented the study results. The descriptive statistics for each measure were presented, followed by an analysis by gender. No gender differences were observed on the

measures of Africentric values. Gender differences were however observed for the *Culture of Violence* as well as the *Reactive Violence* measures, with male learners more likely to endorse positive attitudes to both, compared to female learners. Gender also emerged as the best predictor of attitudes towards violence for the *Reactive Violence* measure. The Africentric measures, namely *Collective Work and Responsibility*, *Cooperative Economics*, and *Self-Determination*, were not associated with the measures of attitudes towards violence in a statistically significant manner.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### Introduction

This discussion chapter covers the main findings in this study in relation to the three research questions. In this study there was no correlation between Africentric values and attitudes towards violence. This finding is different from many other studies especially in the US looking at Afrocentric values and violence. The gender differences in attitudes towards violence as found in this study were consistent with numerous other studies in South Africa the US, Australia and Europe. No gender differences in Africentric values have been found in studies across the world and this was the case in this study. The following paragraphs discuss these findings in more detail.

### The relationship between Africentric Values and Attitudes Towards Violence

The first research question was to assess the relationship between Africentric values (*Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics and Self Determination*) as measured by the Children's Africentric Values Scale (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and attitudes towards violence (*Culture of Violence and Reactive Violence*) as measured by the Attitudes Towards violence Scale: A Measure for Adolescents (Funk *et al.*, 1999). There was no correlation between the Africentric values and the violence variables.

The results from the current study did not confirm studies by Zhang *et al.* (1997) and Megens *et al.* (2010). Zhang *et al.* (1997) and Megens and Weerman (2010) found that there was a relationship between learners holding positive attitudes towards violence and behaving violently. Based on the findings in these two studies and others like them (e.g. Belgrave *et al.*, 1997; Flay *et al.*, 2004; Jagers *et al.*, 2007 ), it was expected that Africentric values would be negatively correlated with positive attitudes towards violence. However, apart from Zhang *et al.* (1997) and Megens and Weerman (2010) using different measures to measure attitudes towards violence and looking at behaviour rather than attitudes, the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the scales used in the current study were not strong enough. This may have contributed to the findings from this current study.

Alternatively, it is possible that the normalisation of violence in South African society and schools, as Pelsler (2008) argues, could nullify whatever relationship there might be between Africentric values and attitudes towards violence. When violence is normalised, Burton (2008) argues that this has become an acceptable way to behave in schools, holding positive attitudes towards violence and/or behaving violently also become normalized. The plausibility of this hypothesis would however need to be tested in those settings where violence is not normative.

### **Gender and Attitudes Towards Violence**

The second research question tested gender differences in attitudes towards violence for school going youth. There were gender differences with regards to attitudes towards violence, with male participants being more prone to endorse *Reactive Violence* as well as the *Culture of Violence*, compared to female participants.

Gender is also a significant predictor of reactive violence, with males being more prone to *Reactive Violence*. These findings are consistent with numerous studies indicating that young males are more likely to hold more violent attitudes and behave more violently than their female peers (Burton, 2008; Cotten *et al.*, 1994; Doss *et al.*, 1998; Mills, 2001). In Australia, Mills (2001) has argued that schools are patriarchal institutions that promote male violence through their emphasis on aggression and power over other men and women. Though the participants in the current study were not randomly selected, Mills's (2001) argument could also be relevant to South African schools. Burton (2008) also noted that female learners are more likely to be robbed, threatened, experience sexual violence and be raped at schools than male learners. This is consistent with the history of formal Western schooling in South Africa which, according to Molteno (1984), stressed a gendered view of education. Boys and girls were treated differently, mirroring societal expectations (Molteno, 1984).

Of the five signifiers of masculinity that Mills (2001) refers to, focus on particular sports that encourage aggression is a probably the most contestable one given the conditions in many schools in South Africa. Due to a lack of resources in many Black South African schools the variety of sports and activities that learners can participate in are very limited. To argue that male learners in South African schools show a proneness to reactive violence because of the sports that schools focus on needs more investigation. That teachers are role models for

learners and male teachers especially for male learners is probably the strongest argument that Mills (2001) offers towards the male aggression and violence in schools. The reported violence and sexual crimes perpetrated mostly by male teachers towards female learners and teachers in South African schools (Prinsloo, 2006) could affect the attitudes and behaviour of male learners.

Petersen *et al.* (2005) and Markowitz and Felson's (1998) observation that definitions of masculinity play a role in explaining why young males are more violent is also helpful in our understanding of the current finding. It is possible that male participants in this study identify with definitions of masculinity that encourage a degree of aggression and violence. What is presumably the shared identification with an aggressive masculinity by the male participants in this study it could be argued also affects their attitudes towards violence, an argument that is compatible with Eiser and van der Pligt's (1988) cultural definition of attitudes.

What seems like the contestation for power within South African schools between learners and teachers (Burton, 2008), where female teachers and learners are the mostly disadvantaged could also explain why male learners are more prone to reactive violence. The patriarchal nature of South African schools that from colonial days emphasised gender differences, force and subjugation (Molteno, 1984) could also be a contributor towards male learner's attitudes towards violence in attempts to retain and exercise their power. The limited resources as frequently noted throughout this study in many schools in South Africa especially in Black schools (Burton, 2008), can create a situation where violence may be viewed as advantageous for many male learners when feeling their access to these limited resources is threatened.

Weakened bonds and attachments (Hirschi, 1969) coupled by the poor conditions in many South African schools could make male learners even more susceptible to attributing their individual disadvantage towards each other and react violently to situations they feel exacerbate this condition as this is their only avenue of coping. Schiele's (1996) reminder of the dangers of valuing materialism over a shared humanity increases the further weakening of bonds, empathy and attachments males learners have with each other and other learners.

The history of colonialism, apartheid, Bantu Education and violence in South Africa has as many commentators have noted contributed to the violence in South African schools today. King's (1997) explanation of violent behaviour by African-American young males which

attributes their violence to historical violence and injustice against Black people that continues today can also offer some insight into the finding that males in this study were more prone to endorse reactive violence. The lack of positive male role models, the disproportionate levels of violence committed by older males and the use and availability of drugs and alcohol in Black South African communities and schools (Burton, 2008) create favourable conditions for young males to behave violently and possibly endorse violent attitudes especially reactive violence in the face of threat. As already discussed many Black male learners in South African schools due to these societal and environmental conditions that they are exposed to and being beneficiaries of a violent patriarchal society they are more likely to feel more disconnected from their communities and schools and as result endorse violent attitudes (Silberman, 1978).

The relationship between risk taking behaviour and the use of drugs and alcohol and violence with males especially has been found in many studies (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999 as cited in Marcus 2007; Marcus, 2007, Swahn *et al.* 2004; Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 1995). Although many of these studies were done in Europe and the US and had larger samples than the current study, Burton (2008) using a comparable sample found that in South African schools the use of drugs and alcohol amongst male learners was very high and also reached the same conclusions regarding violence. The findings in the current study seem to have confirmed what has been found in these other studies around the world.

### **Gender and Africentricity**

The third research question was to measure if there were gender differences in terms of Africentric orientation. There were no statistically significant gender effects. That there were no gender differences in the endorsement of Africentric values in the current study seems consistent with the Afrocentric paradigm. The Africentric paradigm according Asante (1987) and Mbiti (1970), amongst others, emphasises the importance of unity and collective humanity. The Afrocentric paradigm does not draw sharp distinctions between males and females; it recognises interdependence between the male and female principles, in line with the idea of diunital logic (Dixon, 1976; Graham, 1999). This is also reflected in the seven Nguzo Saba principles including the ones measured by the CAVS.

## **Conclusion**

In this study there was no correlation between Afrocentric values and attitudes towards violence. This finding was not consistent with previous studies looking at Africentric values and violent behaviour where a negative correlation was found between the two. Gender was found to have a significant relationship with the violence variables; males were found to be more prone to *Reactive Violence*. This finding is consistent with the literature; Mills (2001) amongst others suggests that male learners do generally hold more violent attitudes than their female peers. In this study, the relationship between gender and Africentric values was not statistically significant.



## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding chapter outlines the research questions that this study sought to answer and the results thereof. The limitations of this study are also discussed together with the recommendations regarding future research and interventions.

### Conclusions about the Research Questions

This was a correlational study looking at the relationship between Africentric values (*Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics and Self Determination*) and attitudes towards violence (*Reactive Violence and Culture of Violence*) in a sample of school-going youth. Gender differences in Africentric values and attitudes towards violence were also explored. No relationship was found between Africentric values and attitudes towards violence. Gender differences were found with regards to attitudes towards violence. Male participants were more prone to *Reactive Violence* than female participants. No gender differences were found with regards to Africentric values. Gender emerged as the only predictor of *Reactive Violence*.

### Study Recommendations

#### *Recommendations for Theory*

The Afrocentric paradigm which is the main theoretical perspective that this study is based on has been and continues to be a major theoretical perspective used mainly in American (USA) studies with African-American youth. More studies using this theoretical perspective are necessary in South Africa especially when working with Black South Africans. More development on Afrocentric theory is necessary to further understand phenomena as they relate to Africans on the continent, in the context of rapid social, economic, and cultural changes. This is more so given that the school violence interventions that have been used in South Africa lack a theoretical perspective that speaks to the history, values and beliefs of Africans.

### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Research using the Afrocentric approach in South Africa is very limited. Research that seeks to understand Africans and the problems facing them needs to make use of the Afrocentric paradigm to adequately understand the phenomena in relation to Africans. This according to Schreiber (2000) could possibly reduce Western hegemony of knowledge production and place African thought and practice into mainstream research practice. In South Africa, the migration of Black learners from Black township schools to former White, Coloured and Indian schools is well documented. However, more research still needs to be conducted to understand the cultural issues and racism faced by Black learners in these schools and how the learners' experiences relate to school violence by or against Black learners in these schools.

Further, the current study was quantitative in nature; the Africentric values and attitudes toward violence as captured by the instruments that were used, were taken for granted. Interpretative, qualitative studies are needed to gain an in-depth understanding of how Africentric values are manifest from a uniquely Southern African perspective. A starting point, perhaps, could be the idea of *ubuntu/botho*, a common concept found in most Southern African societies referring roughly to the humanity of persons. Further, large scale studies would also be necessary to demonstrate the factorial validity of the scales that were used in the current study (i.e. factor analytic studies). Africentric scales standardised for a South African demographic would also be a useful research endeavour, so would the standardisation of local measures of attitudes towards violence.

It would also be important to conduct a study on Africentric values and attitudes towards violence across different South African provinces, including the rural as well as the urban based provinces. Research that would investigate the subtle differences in Afrocentric thought by Black Africans from different communities would contribute immensely to enriching Afrocentric theory and thought locally.

### *Recommendations for Interventions*

The interventions recommended in this study were based on the major findings in the study namely that gender was the only significant predictor of attitudes towards violence with male

learners being more prone to endorse *Reactive Violence*. These interventions would however be suited to both male and female learners as they are also in line with Afrocentric values of equality and communalism. Where necessary these recommendations can be tailored specifically male learners.

The first recommendation for an intervention is conflict resolution training based on Afrocentric values and principles. Conflict resolution training that uses Afrocentric values would help learners develop skills to deal with threatening situations whilst also helping them recognise that communal non-violent solutions benefit them all. This training should involve all members of the school community taking ownership and committing to adhering to all solutions developed. Male learners should not be singled out with this sort of intervention. Discipline and punishment for learners who fail to adhere to non-violent conflict resolution practices should be further training and participation in activities that bring the involved parties to a positive solution. These exercises could include the design and completion of a collage or the like that addresses the issue of dispute and agreed upon solutions.

The second intervention would be for schools and all members of schools to commit to non-sexist and gender sensitive practices. Male learners should be instructed and guided on how to develop and maintain positive non violent relationships with one another and their female peers. Positive citizenry that emphasises responsible and equitable relations between sexes should also be included in this sort of intervention. Non sexist, equitable relations and respect for one another as values reflected in this intervention can be included in school constitutions that all learners, teachers and management of schools should regularly engage with and show their commitment to by signing confidential agreements. An intervention of this sort is hoped would encourage all learners especially male learners to recognise their commonalities, shared humanity and interests in maintaining non-sexist and non-violent schools.

The third intervention is to create safer spaces in schools through better security and encouraging all learners to participate in extra mural activities. All members of the school community should participate in ensuring that school facilities are looked after and learners rewarded accordingly for their efforts. Learners should be encouraged to report spaces in schools where they feel unsafe and these reports should be kept confidential to limit potential for victimisation. Solutions towards keeping schools safe should be designed by all members of the school community including male learners. Participation in positive school activities

limits opportunities for learners to engage in anti-social behaviour which could induce reactive violence. Where resources are scarce as in many Black schools in South Africa creative activities such debating societies, mathematics societies and choirs can be introduced. Male learners should also be encouraged to participate in activities that speak more to their artistic and cognitive abilities and that place a lot less emphasis on aggression and competition.

Positive role modelling for male and female learners should be encouraged from older respectable members of the community and schools should attempt to draw close ties with these individuals. These role models could be other learners who have matriculated from those schools and are in University or participating in other positive activities that regularly visit the schools and speak to learners about non-violent and pro social behaviour. The selection of role models especially the male ones should be based on variety of attributes namely their participation in positive community and societal projects and accomplishments.

The fifth intervention would be to include communities and families in school violence prevention initiatives. Communities are also spaces where learners spend a lot of time and behaviour when threatened with violence outside of school influences behaviour within schools. Family members and community leaders such as Priests, business people and the police should be encouraged to take responsibility for the behaviour of young people and learners in the community. This is in line with the spirit of *ubuntu/botho*. School activities should consistently involve community members in efforts to unify the two and promote active participation in the welfare of all learners. Where families and communities lack the resources and the manpower to assist families and communities in providing guidance for young people and learners state institutions such as DoE, SAPS and other non government institutions should be approached for assistance.

On a regular basis learners should be taught about the dangers of alcohol and drugs and asked to regularly sign confidential agreements regarding their commitment to non use of drugs and alcohol. Punishment and discipline regarding learners who are found to be using drugs and alcohol on school premises should involve family members and where possible the school counsellor or nurse to educate learners and family about the dangers of drugs. Community nurses and social workers can also be asked to help when a school counsellor or nurse are not available. This is in line with an earlier recommendation regarding schools forming ties with

other organisations and qualified individuals within communities. Learners and student bodies should be made aware of the availability of these sorts of interventions and asked to contribute towards how they are implemented and sold to all students.

### **Limitations**

The instruments used in the current study were not standardised for the population of Black African learners whose mother tongue is Zulu. This possibly had a bearing not only on the reliability and validity of the measures, but the participants' ability to understand some of the words and concepts. It is possible that the African values captured in the CAVS were limited and not representative of all the values cherished in Southern Africa, particularly the value of *ubuntu/botho*. The homogenous nature of the sample, namely school-going youth from a similar (urban) background, may have meant that there were no variations in the measure of an Africentric orientation. Further studies using a diverse, randomly selected and stratified sample and across a wide range of age groups could perhaps shed more insight into the relationship between an Africentric orientation and attitudes towards violence.

### **Conclusion**

The study investigated the relationship between Afrocentric values (*Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics and Self Determination*) as measured by the CAVS (Belgrave *et al.*, 1997) and attitudes towards violence (*Culture of Violence and Reactive Violence*) as measured by the Attitudes Towards Violence Scale: A Measure for Adolescents (Funk *et al.*, 1999). The sample comprised Black African secondary school youth in the Pietermaritzburg area. No relationship was established between an Africentric orientation as assessed by the measures mentioned above, and attitudes towards violence. There were however gender differences in terms of attitudes towards violence: the male learners were more prone to express a positive attitude towards violence, compared to the female learners. Further, gender was the only statistically significant predictor of reactive violence. The study was discussed with reference to the gendered dimension of violence in schools in particular. The study limitations, particular as this related to the measures that were used were discussed, and recommendations for theory, interventions and further research highlighted.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
School of Psychology  
Private Bag X01  
Scottsville  
3209



Dear learner.

I am Thabo Sekhesa. I'm in the process of completing my Masters degree in Educational Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. One of the requirements for the degree is that students must complete an independent research study and write it up in the form of a dissertation. I have chosen to study the relationship between African values and learners' attitudes towards violence. My target population is Black African school-going youth in the Greater Pietermaritzburg area. The primary objective of the study is to establish if African values can add value to our understanding of the factors that could possibly contribute towards making schools safer environments for learning.

You have been chosen to participate in the study because you attend High School in the Pietermaritzburg region. Please note however that participation in the study is entirely voluntary; you can choose not to participate. Should you participate, you will be requested to complete two questionnaires and this should take you about 30-40 minutes of your time. If you start completing the questionnaire and you change your mind before you are finished, please note that you are free to stop participating at any time. You will not be punished for this. The researcher will respect your decision to do so. Should you not feel well or become distressed while completing the questionnaire, please advise me immediately as we have made arrangements for you to discuss this with a counsellor at the University.

It is also OK not to answer some of the questions if you do not want to. All the information collected will be kept confidential. This means that no one will know how you have answered the questionnaire, as we are interested in the overall result, and not what you think as an

individual. You will not be asked to indicate your name on the questionnaire, except your Grade, age, and where you attend school.

For any questions you may have about this study, you can contact my supervisor Professor N. Mkhize who can be reached at the University of KwaZulu Natal. His contact details are:

Email – [Mkhize@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Mkhize@ukzn.ac.za) or telephone -033 -260 [5963](tel:033-260-5963)

You can also contact me on the following email address ([Thabo.sekhesa@gmail.com](mailto:Thabo.sekhesa@gmail.com)) or telephone (0724207502).

Yours truly,

Thabo Sekhesa

## Consent

I ..... consent to participate in the study conducted by Mr Sekhesa. I understand that the objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between African values and how learners perceive violence.

I also understand that the information collected through the study will be kept entirely confidential, and that I'm free to stop participating at any time, even after I have started to complete the questionnaires. My right to access a counsellor, should I feel uncomfortable about the issues in the questionnaire, has been explained to me. I also understand that this is a research study and that it is not going to give me any personal benefits in the immediate short term.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Place: .....

Age.....

Grade.....

## APPENDIX B: ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE SCALE

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. PLEASE READ EACH INSTRUCTION CAREFULLY
2. YOU MAY NOT SPEAK TO ANYONE DURING THIS PROCESS EXCEPT TO THE RESEARCHER
3. PLEASE INDICATE BY USING A CROSS TO SELECT ONE RESPONSE THAT YOU MOST AGREE WITH ABOUT THE STATEMENTS
4. THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL TAKE YOU ABOUT 20-25 MINUTES TO COMPLETE
5. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK THE RESEARCHER QUESTIONS SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY, WHILE COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

DATE:.....

Sex: Circle one:      Male                      Female

Age.....

Residential Area where you attend School.....

PLEASE TURN OVER THE PAGE

**1. I could see myself committing a violent crime in 5 years.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**2. I could see myself joining a gang.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**3. It's okay to use violence to get what you want.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**4. I try to stay away from places where violence is likely.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**5. People who use violence get respect.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**6. Lots of people are out to get you.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**7. Carrying a gun or knife would help me feel safe.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**8. If a person hits you, you should hit them back.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**9. It's okay to beat up a person for badmouthing me or my family.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**10. It's okay to carry a gun or knife if you live in a rough neighbourhood.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**11. It's okay to do whatever it takes to protect myself.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**12. It's good to have a gun.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**13. Parents should tell their children to use violence if necessary.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**14. If someone tries to start a fight with you, you should walk away.**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

**15. I'm afraid of getting hurt by violence**

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
------------------------	-------------	------------	----------	----------------------

## APPENDIX C: THE CHILDREN'S AFRICENTRIC VALUE SCALE

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. PLEASE READ EACH INSTRUCTION CAREFULLY
2. YOU MAY NOT SPEAK TO ANYONE DURING THIS PROCESS EXCEPT TO THE RESEARCHER
3. PLEASE INDICATE BY USING A CROSS TO SELECT ONE RESPONSE THAT YOU MOST AGREE WITH ABOUT THE STATEMENTS
4. THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL TAKE YOU ABOUT 15-20 MINUTES TO COMPLETE
5. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK THE RESEARCHER QUESTIONS SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY, WHILE COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

DATE:.....

Sex: Circle one:      Male                      Female

Age.....

Residential Area where you attend School.....

PLEASE TURN OVER THE PAGE

**1. Decisions should be based on what will benefit everyone and not just a few people**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**2. Families, schools, and the community should work together to improve themselves**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**3. Black people should work together to make their communities great**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**4. When there is a problem in a community, everyone who lives there should participate in some way to help correct the problem.**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**5. Our parents, teachers, and community leaders should look out for our best interest.**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**6. When possible, Black people should spend their money in Black owned stores and shops.**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**7. Black people should start their own businesses and employ their own people to work in them.**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**8. Black people should be able to make decisions for their own people.**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------

**9. Black people should not let anyone stop them from achieving their goals**

1. Agree	2. Disagree	3. Not sure
----------	-------------	-------------



