

A phenomenological Explication of the Meaning of the  
concept Self-respect in High School learners

By

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Nokuthula Siphiwokuhle Belle hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “A phenomenological Explication of the Meaning of the concept Self-respect in High School Learners” is the result of my own caption and in execution. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of completed references.

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Nokuthula Siphiwokuhle Belle

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Date

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my deceased family members mom and dad (Mr. A.M. and Mrs. H.N. Belle), and my sister Thobile. Honour goes to the surviving members, my two younger brothers (Thamsanqa and Sanele), nephew Swelihle and my two daughters (Samkelo and Olwethu).

## **ABSTRACT**

Self-respect is defined as pride and confidence in oneself, a feeling that one is behaving with honor and dignity. The objective of the study was to find out the conceptualization of self-respect from high school learners. This study adopted a phenomenological approach to facilitate the understanding of the information gathered. The sample consisted of 10 participants: 5 males and 5 females. Participants were Grade 12 learners who were willing to participate. A self-administered questionnaire was given to the participants to fill. Results from the participants revealed that the concept self-respect means respecting yourself and others, as well as having self-confidence. Participants also mentioned that self-respect comes from home, from parents as well as friends. The study concludes with limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

## Table of contents

Contents	Page no.
<b>Chapter one</b>	
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 theoretical background of the study.....	2-3
1.2 Motivation of the study.....	3
1.3 Statement of the problem.....	4
1.4 Aim/objective.....	4
1.5 Significant of the study.....	4
1.6 Methodology and design.....	4
1.6.1 Research design.....	4
1.7 Data collection.....	5
1.7.1 Sampling.....	5
1.7.2 Instrument for data collection.....	5
1.8 Data analysis.....	5
1.9 Ethical consideration.....	6
<b>Chapter two</b>	
2. Literature review.....	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Overview of self-respect.....	7-15
2.3 Self-respect in place for self-esteem.....	15
2.3.1 Self-esteem.....	15
2.3.2 Psychologists.....	16
2.3.3 Psychological theory.....	16
2.3.4 Piaget's influence on Moral reasoning.....	17
2.3.5 Educationalists.....	18
2.3.6 Philosophers.....	18-23

### **Chapter three**

3. Research Methodology.....	24
3.1 Introduction.....	24
3.2 Phenomenological approach.....	24
3.3 Phenomenology defined.....	25
3.4 Brief history of phenomenology.....	26
3.5 Data analysis: Phenomenological approach.....	27
3.6 Data collection.....	28
3.6.1 Sampling .....	28
3.6.2Instrument for data collection .....	28
3.7 Data analysis .....	29
3.8 Ethical consideration .....	29

### **Chapter four**

4.1 Introduction .....	30
4.2 Qualitative data presentation.....	30-49
4.3 Discussion of themes.....	49
4.3.1 Respecting yourself, respecting others and self confidence.....	49
4.3.2 Social grant, peer pressure and unprotected sex.....	50
4.3.3 Crime, unprotected sex and drugs.....	51
4.3.4 Organizing workshops, counselling, respecting others/elders, respecting themselves, join SCO/RCL and attend church.....	52

### **Chapter five**

5. Discussion.....	55
5.1 Summary of findings.....	55-56
5.2 Conclusion.....	57
5.3 Recommendations.....	58
5.4 Limitation of the study.....	58-59
References.....	60-64
APPENDIX A: Consent form.....	65
APPENDIX B: Questionnaire.....	66

## **Chapter One**

### **Orientation of the study**

#### **1. Introduction**

Respect begins within the individual. The original state of respect is based on awareness of the self as a unique entity, a life force within, a spiritual being and a soul. The elevated consciousness of knowing 'who I am' 'the self' arises. With such insight, there is faith in the self and wholeness and completeness within. Moreover, with self realization one experiences true self-respect (Insanally, 2007).

The moral concept of self-respect is tightly connected to the notion of human dignity. It is by virtue of this dignity that human beings are assumed to deserve respect both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Self-respect has to do with attitudes such as insistence on one's basic right, a mad refusal to compromise one's personal honesty or readiness to endanger one's self in the struggle against people who insult or humiliate one even if they are stronger than one self (Insanally, 2007).

De Waal (2001) cited O'Regan when he argued that recognizing the right to dignity is an acknowledgement of the intrinsic worth of human beings: human beings are entitled to be treated as worthy of respect and concern. Therefore, human dignity means everyone has an inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected. Cohen (2004) treats the self as a "reflexive project", having to sustain itself by a continuous process of reflection and revision.



If one acts indifferently to one's rights or honesty, then one lacks self-respect. Thus, the individual's dignity is injured even on a subjective psychological level and that affects the positive attitude toward the self. The study looks at the deeper meaning and understanding that learners have of the concept of self-respect.

### **1.1 Theoretical background of the study**

Addelson (1994) argues that self-respect should be central to how we live. It is a moral question of freedom. Autonomy, creativity, personal development and fulfillment seem to be morally fundamental, and all of these seem to involve the self. However, the notion of self-respect is ambiguous. According to Massey (cited in Kretzmer & Klein, 2002) the ambiguity concerns a fundamental question about self-respect as to whether it is a psychological or moral concept.

In terms of the psychological, or the subjective concept of self-respect, a person who respects himself or herself believes that he or she acts in accordance with his or her conception of worthy behavior and has confidence that he or she will continue to do so. A crucial point about the concept of self-respect is that a self-respecting person's beliefs and attitudes towards his or her actions meet any independent standards of worthiness or appropriateness (Kretzmer & Klein, 2002).

Conflict is initiated when the awareness of one's original nature and the original nature of the other is lacking. As a result, external negative influences rule supreme over respect. To be secure in the elevated stage of the self the person should ensure genuine respect for the self and from others. Furthermore, every human being has an innate worth which is pure and

virtuous. Such a mindset guarantees ultimate victory, since interaction on such basis ensures that the inherent goodness of the self and from others emerges.

Insanally (2007) is of the view that the beginning of personal weaknesses is in the absence of one word: *self*. When the word *self* is removed from the phrase self-respect a void is left, the void is filled by a variety of desires and expectations, each specifically. The individual, having become dependent on external forces rather than internal powers, then measures respect by physical and material factors, such as unwanted pregnancies which are increasing in learners at schools. These behaviors may suggest that learners are engaging in unprotected sex and expose themselves to sexually transmitted infections (STI's), HIV/AIDS as well as violence in school. This brings us to the question of whether all of the social ills, such as STI's and HIV/AIDS, mentioned above are due to the lack of self-respect, (Insanally, 2007).

To develop the value of respect within the self and to give it practical expression in daily life is a challenge. Obstacles are encountered which test the strength of respect, and these obstacles are often left at the most vulnerable times. Another way of developing the value of self-respect is by using discipline, which in actual fact is used to assist learners develop responsibility and self-control (Khalsa, 2007). Self-confidence is needed to deal with circumstances in an optimistic, hopeful, and self-assured manner. In situations where all support seems to have vanished, what remains is the extent to which one has been able to become self-reliant internally.

## **1.2 Motivation of the study**

The motivation for the study was a realization that learners are exposed to all kinds of maladaptive behaviors. The current researcher wanted to find out whether the maladaptive

behaviors observed were as a result of lack of self dignity or a degeneration in the moral fiber.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The problem is that learners lose their sense of self-respect to the extent that they end up exposing themselves to all kinds of dangerous and unacceptable behaviors. These behaviors include unwanted pregnancy, engaging in unprotected sex, drug use as well as violence in schools. These dangerous and unacceptable behaviors make learners lose self-respect which result in other people not respecting them.

### **1.4 Aim/ Objective of the study**

Learners conceptualization of the concept 'self-respect'.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

It is hoped that research in this area will contribute in gaining insight in how the youth conceptualize self-respect, and thus influencing a decision in coining programmes that will assist learners to think and behave responsibly as individuals. This will impact in prevention of unwanted pregnancies; minimize the incidence of STI's, HIV/AIDS, drug use and violence in schools.

## **1.6 Methodology and design**

### ***1.6.1 Research design***

This was a qualitative study. The qualitative approach allows for a detailed description of participants understanding and experiences. The researcher used research questionnaires that consisted of open-ended questions. The researcher wanted to give the participants the opportunity and space to answer more freely and openly about their understanding of the concept self-respect. This allowed for personal interpretation and perceptions to emerge (Barker, Pistrang & Elliot, 1994).

## **1.7 Data Collection**

### ***1.7.1 Sampling***

The researcher used convenience sampling which is the sub-type of non-probability sampling. In non-probability sampling not every element in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 2006). Convenience sampling involves selecting respondents primarily on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate.

The sample comprised of ten grade 12 learners at Ongoye high school. The participants were 5 males and 5 females who were willing to participate.

### ***1.7.2 Instrument for data collection***

The researcher obtained information by means of questionnaires that consisted of open ended questions.

## **1.8 Data Analysis**

When the data was collected a phenomenological approach was used to analyze the data. In conjunction with the above approach an interpretive form of analysis was used to extract common themes that emerged from the participants' views (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) are of the view that theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in a research that follows a qualitative route.

## **1.9 Ethical Considerations**

Apart from instrumentation and procedural concerns, collecting data from people raises ethical concerns. These include taking care of the participants, avoiding harming people, having due regard for privacy, respecting them as individuals and not subjecting them to unnecessary research. Permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the University's Ethics Committee and the Department of Psychology at the University of Zululand. Participants signed an informed consent before taking part in the research study. Confidentiality and anonymity was ensured by excluding the names of the interviewees, schedule and questionnaires. Participants were informed about the nature of the study, the procedure of the study and their rights. Bailey (1987) states that it is important to give a full explanation to participants about the nature of the study, its procedure and their ethical rights. The full explanation of the study was given to the participants and it was emphasized that participation is voluntary.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the literature previously written on the concept of self-respect and information relating to the topic and concept. This will form an understanding on and offer some insight into the topic researched.

#### **2.2 Overview of self respect**

Self-respect is a subjective attitude each individual has towards himself or herself based on standards of worthiness and excellence endorsed by the individual. On this account, self-respect can characterize slaves and masters, chauvinist men and servile women and moral saints and moral monsters and provide the slaves, servile women and moral monsters beliefs that their behavior accords with what they regard as the true conception of worthy behavior (Insanally, 1993).

If we deserve respect by virtue of our humanity then, indeed, nothing that our tormentors do to us can provide us with a second reason to think we deserve less respect. Hence, nothing they do to us can provide us with a second reason to feel humiliated, but the same holds true if the standards by which we value ourselves are subjective. If a person has a firm sense of his or her value and a secure conviction that his or her conception of his or her good, his or her plan of life is worth carrying out (Insanally, 1993).

Self-awareness is elusive. Hilgard (cited in Brown, 1998) postulates, 'You find yourself as if you are between the two mirrors of a barbershop, with each image viewing each other, so that

as the self takes a look at itself, it also gets confused as to the self that is doing the looking and the self which is being looked at'. A focus on the way people think and feel about themselves distinguishes self-psychology from other areas of psychology. Self-psychology is concerned with subjective experiences (with what people think they are like), whereas personality psychology is more concerned with objective experiences (with what people are actually like) (Brown, 1998).

When looking at self-respect, one has to have knowledge of the self in order to understand and respect the self. There are many sources of self knowledge that we can look at. Brown (1998) views the self in the physical world. Physical reality provides one meaning by which you can learn about yourself. Though useful as the source of self-knowledge, the physical world is limited in two important respects.

First, many attributes are not anchored in physical reality (Festinger cited in Brown, 1998). As observed by Brown (1998) in the event of individuals wanting to know how kind they are, they cannot necessarily make use of a yardstick to determine their kindness. Secondly, the same trend, according to Brown, would apply in determining the extent to which the individual is clever. It should be noted though that the physical base for gaining knowledge in these domains (and many others) is, more often than not, lacking. It is also worth noting that even when an attribute can be assessed with reference to the physical world, the knowledge we gain from the physical world is not necessarily the knowledge we are after. When people get to know their height this does not really tell them whether they are tall or not. They need to know how tall other people are, and whether they are taller or shorter than them.

A significant point here is that attributes like tall and strong acquire meaning only with respect to the attributes of others. This is true in many of the ways people think about themselves. In Brown's view most of our personal identities are couched in comparative terms. Brown argues that when we say we are independent, we are implicitly saying that we think we are more independent than other people, when we say we are talented, we are implicitly suggesting that we think we are more talented than are most others (Brown, 1998).

Brown (1998) further explains the social world in comparison socially, whereby people engage in a process of social comparison. They compare their attributes with others and draw inferences about what they are like. Festinger (cited in Brown, 1998) postulates that people have a drive to know what they are really like, and that often they can satisfy this desire only by comparing themselves with others. The need for accurate self-knowledge is said to have been originally thought to guide the social comparison process. From this perspective, the individuals would best be able to tell how fast they really are by comparing with other people of their gender and age group. To the extent that they run a mile faster than these similar others, they would think of themselves as being faster in comparative terms of Festinger (cited in Brown, 1998).

Mkhize (2004) explains the notion of self-respect as an internalized ethical-moral process. Internalization is defined as an indispensable part of becoming a person which is tantamount to the development of self-understanding. Self-understanding emerges against the background of social practices provided by culture at large. Shotter (cited in Mkhize, 2004) argues that internalization involves an ethical-moral transformation of the self: Shotter (cited in Mkhize, 2004) is of the view that in learning how to be a responsible member of a certain social group, the individual must learn to do certain things in the right kind of way; how to



perceive, think, talk, act, and to experience his or her surroundings in ways that make sense to the others and in ways considered legitimate.

Shotter's (cited in Mkhize, 2004) reinterpretation of internalization is to be understood as paving a way for the emergence of personhood from the collective forms of life. Internalization as an ethical-moral involves acquiring ways of understanding oneself as a human being in relation to others. The ethical-moral of this process is understood as pointing out the fact that these ways of behaving are not ours. It is argued that these ways have always been there, serving people's purposes. Shotter's (cited in Mkhize, 2004) view in this regard finds support in MacIntyre's (cited in Mkhize, 2004) argument that 'the self has to find its moral-identity in and through its membership in communities'.

Middleton (2004) suggests that respect should be taken care of and people have supportive reasons for that. Rawls (cited in Dillon 2001; Holmgren 1998, 1993; Novitz 1998; Haber 1991; & Murphy, 1982) argues that self-respect is a 'primary good,' something that rational beings want whatever else they want, because it is vital to the experienced quality of individual lives and to the ability to carry out or achieve whatever projects or aims an individual might have. First, Middleton, (2004) is of the view that there is a sense of personal identities once a person can acknowledge others. Second, feelings, desires and preferences together with influences from collective cultures and structures also play an important part in constructing an individual identity. Self-respect is apparently the foundation for people to be able to identify who they are.

Thinkers, especially those in political philosophy are interested in self-respect and self, which are explained or addressed in everyday life. They tend to discuss justice and equality,

injustice and oppression, autonomy and agency, moral, political rights and duties, moral motivation and moral development, cultural diversity and toleration, punishment and political violence (Dillon, Robbin & Edward, 2010)

Middleton (2004) argues that political theorists use the term 'self-respect' as a moral concept, while psychologists prefer to use the term 'self-esteem' as a set of character traits that individuals live in accordance with. He further states that the moral aspect is regarded as fundamentally different from the psychological aspect and that people might regard 'self-esteem' as a favorable opinion of themselves whilst 'self-respect' is said to be more concerned with the recognition of people's own moral worth (Middleton, 2004).

According to Middleton (2004) self-esteem and self-respect are different in that, for an individual to maintain self-esteem it is important to own self-respect. Similarly, Honneth (cited in Middleton, 2004) holds the same view that the importance of self-respect to self-esteem plays such a small role in the psychological literature. Middleton (2004) argues that psychologists do not conceptualize sufficiently the concepts with which they are working.

Middleton (2004) further explains that the maintenance of self-respect is an important political aspect. For Middleton, the maintenance of self-respect is a necessity for social justice and that a strong sense of self is important for people's well-being. As a result of respect, people are not automatically committed to social justice. Once a person lacks self-respect, there are more chances that the person cannot contribute in the society. Self respect centers around status worth. This worth arises from social role, group and membership in certain class (Dillon, Robbin & Edward, 2010).

An important point as argued by Middleton (2004) is that being self-respecting means that an individual is more likely to cling to the ideals of justice. According to Middleton (2004) individuals need to embrace their self-respect and that will lead to the creation of respectful individuals. Middleton (2004) acknowledges the usefulness of Goffman's (cited in Middleton, 2004) insights into what he calls the 'dramaturgical approach' where his central claim is that when people present themselves in public, they do so conscious of the image that they are trying to project and as such they are playing a role.

As argued by Middleton (2004) people tend to present themselves differently in different situations and they are aware of that. By doing so, they are not pleasing other people, but they are presenting themselves with a less important or greater degree of confidence depending on the situation. In this regard Middleton (2004) makes reference to some psychologists who argue that, people who present themselves positively have higher 'self-esteem' and they take pride in their confidence. In that regard Dillon, Robbin & Edward, (2010) stipulated that self-respect, states confidence in one's merit as a person, rests on an appraisal of oneself in light of the normative self-conception. Thus, people have and try to live by certain standards of worthiness by which they are committed to judge themselves.

With the strong sense of self, people can easily adopt various social roles, in which they are engaged. As observed by Middleton (2004) the question arises as to why people go to the trouble of 'learning' the roles which they occupy. One possible explanation advanced by Middleton (2004) is that the roles are not so much learned as they are part of the common stock of knowledge which people possess (cf. Middleton, 2004). Margalit (1996, cited in Dillon, Robbin & Edward, 2010) concurs with the fact that a decent society is one whose

institutions do not shame people, by giving people reasons to consider their self-respect to be injured but rather for it to be protected and respected.

Middleton (2004) further explains that people present themselves differently, because they have adopted different personalities. According to Middleton, people switch from role to role during the course of a day, for example, from being a 'mother/father', 'wife or husband', to being a 'friend', 'tutor' or 'manager' in the various contexts in which they are socially involved. They seek to project an image of themselves which is appropriate to the context.

The desire for respect is universal, therefore it is constructed and suggests a strong psychological ground for some behaviors in that people want to feel that those who matter to them and their peers take them seriously. Respect is not the only passion that motivates people. Middleton (2004) makes reference to Buttney and Williams who are said to have shown that whilst most people can bear the feeling of being disliked, they cannot bear the injury to their sense of self from being disrespected.

Similarly, Sennett (cited in Middleton, 2004) noted that for young people there is no greater insult than being 'dissed' and that this suggests that people expect to be respected and noticed. Thus, it is viewed as not insignificant that people tend to notice respect far less than disrespect. This is said to be in line with what Honneth (cited in Middleton, 2004) argued that as the 'petty insults' that constitute disrespect and that it serves to remind people that to be respected is a default position in democratic societies, (Middleton, 2004).

According to Middleton (2004) if the roles people play in public are motivated partly by their desire to be respected by others, then what Goffman (cited in Middleton, 2004) called the

‘backstage area’, where people live out their ‘personal’ lives, is the place where they construct their self-respect. This, according to Middleton (2004) is certainly the space where the ‘real of the self’ emerges and is conceived of as the place where people’s own self-worth resides.

It is further argued by Middleton (2004) that what others think about the individual is important in the public, social arena and what the individual thinks about himself or herself is important when he or she is alone with just his or her thoughts. At some point people must reflect on the type of person they are and might become. They must decide that they are the type of people who deserve respect, not just the respect of others, but from the point of view of their own personal identity, the respect of themselves. They might sum this up by saying that people must recognize themselves as persons of worth before they can confidently stride the stage of life.

The impulsive ability which is common to all mature adults is said to have an important political value. The ability to differentiate right from wrong, good from bad, respect from disrespect is said to be precisely the psychological basis of a ‘sense of justice’. To say that self-respect is constructed in people’s interactions with others and in the reflexive backstage space would be to make respect highly individualized, but to be a ‘social actor’ is, to some extent, said to be recognized both as an individual and a member of various collectivities, (Middleton, 2004).

People’s personal identities are said to be not, and probably could not be, the result of their own emergent sense of self (Middleton, 2004). Young (cited in Middleton, 2004) argues that people’s sense of self, which is identities, is constructed through their thoughts and an

awareness of others' perception of them. Concurring with Middleton, Young (cited in Middleton, 2004) argued that the self is not just an autonomous being, but is formed through the various collectivities to which people belong. Furthermore, Middleton (2004) is of the view that Young points to the way in which people construct their sense of self in relation to the social groups of which they form a part and the sense they have of how these groups are generally perceived.

Young (cited in Middleton, 2004) argues that group identity can make some people victims of what she terms 'cultural imperialism' and that being a victim of group-based disrespect can, but does not necessarily, lead to a lowering of people's self-respect. As observed by Middleton (2004) in Young's account, members of particular groups are imprisoned within their own bodies which are regarded, by others and often by members of the oppressed groups themselves, as ugly, dirty or unhygienic. Women, for example, are stereotypically supposed to be beautiful and desirable, and those who do not fit the stereotype can attract a form of dislike both from others and from themselves.

## **2.3 Self-respect in place of self-esteem.**

### ***2.3.1 Self-esteem***

According to Kristjanson (2007) self-esteem was, not so long ago, the Holy Grail of much psychological and educational research, hailed both as an essential social vaccine and as a panacea for an array of personal and educational problems. Every flow has its ebb, however, and in recent years people have seen the ideal of (indiscriminately) boosted self-esteem come under sustained attack from various quarters.

### **2.3.2 Psychologists**

It is argued that psychologists' grumble that the expected correlations between high self-esteem and salient positively valence factors, such as above average school achievement and pro-social behavior, have failed to materialize in empirical research. Instead, null findings abound and, if anything, there seems to be a link between high self-esteem and various types of risky and antisocial behavior (Baumeister et al., 2003; cf. Emler, 2001, cited in Kristjanson, 2007).

### **2.3.3 Psychological theory**

- ***Social cognitive theory and phenomenology***

According to Parvin (1993) social cognitive theory shares with Rogers and proponents of the human potential movement an emphasis on the concept of self. According to social cognitive theory, people have self-conceptualization and self-evaluations, but they do not have selves or generalized self-concepts: "A global self-concept does not do justice to the complexity of self-efficacy perceptions, which vary across different activities, different levels of the same activity, and different circumstances" (Bandura, 1986).

- ***Social cognitive theory and learning theory***

Parvin (1993) is of the view that social cognitive theory has its roots in learning theory. As noted above it was called *social learning theory*. It shares with Hullian and Skinnerian learning theories an emphasis on research, on the importance of learned behavior in relation to specific situations or contexts and on the importance of rewards in influencing behavior. Furthermore, both theories reject the medical symptoms-disease model and emphasize

therapy as the learning of new patterns of thinking and behaving rather than as a cure for some underlying problem. However, in their emphasis on cognitive processes, social cognitive theorists argue that behavior is regulated not just by external consequences but by internal expectancies and self-regulatory processes.

#### **2.3.4 Piaget's influence on moral reasoning**

Moral development, Piaget theorized, took the form of a progression from heteronomous (subject to external rules) to autonomous (internal) moral reasoning. Heteronomous moral reasoning is the reasoning initially adopted by children and is characterized by strictly adherence to rules and duties and obedience to authority. The heteronomous orientation is characterized by the child's respect for the unquestionable authority of adults and parents (Hook, Watts & Cockcroft, 2002).

Rules are regarded as fixed and absolute, deriving from some supreme commandment (adult, parents, or even deity). One cannot break or amend these commandments, regardless of whether they are inconvenient, or even unfair. This is the reasoning of children younger than the age of ten years (it is also the reason of some adolescents: the rules are rules), (Hook, et al., 2002). They further argue that reasoning results from three factors. The first factor is due to a problem of 'realism' (which is characterized by the difficulty the child experiences in distinguishing rules from real objective phenomena). The second factor is due to the egocentric nature of the young child's cognitive structure in that he/she cannot take a different perspective. The third factor results from power relationships between adults and children in that children are subject to adult authority.



The autonomous moral reasoning orientation develops out of interaction with other children and is characterized by an ability to consider rules critically. These rules selectively apply to goals of mutual respect and cooperation. For example, if the rules of the game of playing cards are inconvenient or unfair they can be altered with the agreement of the participants (Hook, et al., 2000).

Parvin (1993) outlines that Gilligan stipulate her own stage theory of moral development for women. Like Kohlberg's, it has three major divisions: pre-conventional, conventional, and post conventional. But for Gilligan, the transitions between the stages are fueled by changes in the sense of self rather than in changes in cognitive capability. Kohlberg's approach is based on Piaget's cognitive developmental model. Gilligan's is based on a modified version of Freud's approach to ego development. Thus Gilligan is combining Freud (or at least a Freudian theme) with Kohlberg & Piaget.

Parvin (1993) argues that Gilligan has shown that (Kohlberg's, Freud's & Erickson's) systems are based on a male-centered view. Kohlberg built his theory based on interviews with males only. She has certainly shown us the inadequacy of that. In addition, she has broken the idea that there is only one dimension of moral reasoning. If there can be two, why not three? Why not several? Finally, she has connected moral decision making back into concerns about both the self and the social environment in which the self lives.

### **2.2.5 Educationists**

Kristjansen (2007) drawing from Damon (1995) and Stout (2000) argued that educationalists point out that if self-esteem is understood, in line with the typical psychological instruments, simply as satisfaction with the *global ratio* of one's achievements to one's aspirations, then the easiest way to enhance self-esteem is by diminishing the aspirations: dulling educational

standards and dumbing down the curriculum. The catch there, however, is that although the house of such (deluded) educational self-esteem may be easy to build, it is draughty to live in and liable to fall once students enter the “real” outside world.

### **2.2.6 Philosophers**

Kristjanson (2006) (cited Smith & Cigman) that they are of the view that philosophers have long looked upon the social-science notion of global self-esteem with suspicion and that it appears to be an artificial construct with little, if any, grounding in people’s rich ordinary-language repertoire of ‘self-conceptions’, ranging from arrogance and boastfulness to meekness and diffidence. Moreover many *ethicists* complain—the concept of self-esteem lacks an objective moral grounding. Given that what self-esteem instruments measure is simply subjective self-reported satisfaction, amongst those individuals epitomizing high self-esteem may be the big-headed bully, the mug drug baron, and the Machiavellian tyrant (Kristjanson, 2006).

Kristjanson (2007) is of the view that if self-esteem’s star has faded of late, it is salutary to ask what could replace it and that it seems counter-intuitive to suppose that people’s *self-concept* has no bearing on their achievement in life. Kristjanson (2007) further suggests that if self-concept is simply equated with global self-esteem, as has often been done in the psychological literature of late, then people are stuck with the counter-intuitive implication. According to Kristjanson (2007) if people understand self-concept as the totality of people’s attitudes towards themselves, involving a number of distinct aspects or dimensions, then various variables for research other than global self-esteem may emerge. It is suggested that it could well be that *domain-specific self-esteem*, esteem predicated upon a specific domain of one’s life rather than that life as seen from a *global* perspective. Another variable is *self-*

*confidence* which is global or specific. Bandura (1997) argues convincingly that students' "perceived self-efficacy" substantially influences their likelihood of accomplishing tasks. The final variable for research is *self-respect*.

According to Kristjanson (2007) a shift in research focus from self-esteem to self-respect would mean that closer attention is paid to the nature and content of the relevant 'aspirations' or 'pretensions' as the father of the notion of global self-esteem. As noted by Kristjanson (2007) philosophers have termed this particular type of self-esteem 'appraisal self-respect'. So, having forsaken global self-esteem, it remains to be seen whether social science should turn its empirical compass to self-respect and appraisal of self-respect.

Kristjanson (2007) assumes that many *educationists* would take well to the suggestion of social science turning its empirical compass to self-respect and appraisal of self-respect as they seem more intuitively plausible than there exists a positive correlation—and even a causal connection—between self-respect and school achievement than between global self-esteem and school achievement. Kristjanson (2007) believes that a common view amongst academics and lay people alike is that self-respect imparts in people the general zest necessary for pursuing their life plans. It is suggested that high self-respect can help keep students focused and working hard, inducing them not to let their talents lie fallow. It has been suggested, moreover, that self-respect is easier to achieve than many other educational competences (Nesbitt, in Kristjanson, 2007).

According to Kristjanson (2007) philosophers will hardly protest either at such a change of compass. After all, self-respect has a more secure grounding in ordinary parlance than global self-esteem. Notably, self-respect may provide precisely what self-esteem sadly lacks from a

moral point of view, namely, an objective basis for or true measure of moral worth. It is also said to be common in the philosophical literature to see self-respect referred to as the guardian of the other moral virtues: the column of true majesty in human beings which preserves commendable character traits and contributes to the continuation of morality.

Roland and Foxx (cited in Middleton, 2004) are of the view that objectivity is what differentiates 'self-respect' from 'self-esteem' and that it is the presence of a "moral code" in self-respect which provides its objective components. It is also argued that the people having to carry out the relevant measurements in the end are, however, empirical *psychologists*. According to some psychologists, self-respect is a moral concept and, as Roland and Foxx note correctly, many psychologists are made uneasy by issues of morality, to the point even of being averse to the very word "morality," viewing it as blatantly value laden with connotations of a holier-than-thou attitude.

Insanally (1993) avers that people's knowledge and understanding lead to self-love and self-respect. Self-respect is the second most popular self-help topic. It is suggested that all people have something to say on the subject and that self-respect is arguably the medication prescribed for people with "low self-esteem." Many people are said to lack confidence or esteem as a result of their spirit having been broken. This situation could have come about as a result of having been verbally abused as children and others having endured insult from their spouses, friends or peers.

Many of the world's top psychologists, as well as other experts, teach that in order to overcome this problem people should learn to respect themselves. It is argued that such people are unhappy because they focus too much on helping others and as a result they do not

take care of their own needs. These experts are of the view that respecting others is impossible without the individual first learning to respect himself or herself (Insanally, 1993). It is argued that many people go through life assuming that they understand a specific subject mainly because they believe the commonly held position and this is viewed as being not different with the subject of self respect. Respect is not defined in the dictionary as it is intangible. Moreover respect is said to be a feeling and is an earned position something which is contrary to popular beliefs. It is argued that one of the keys to respect is the word 'personal' and that is when the individual loves himself or herself (Gitomor, 2008).

Hall (cited in Richman, Brown & Clark, 1984) noted that the "storm and stress" period of adolescence, physical and sexual maturation, social development, a consideration of life-goals and the establishment of a personal identity all create a conflict and stress in adolescent's development. It is therefore argued that the most critical outcome of adolescent development is the appreciation of self and that positive feelings about self are associated with self-evaluation of one's own qualities, abilities and behavior.

It is suggested that self-esteem, the evaluation of one's own value and the emotional response to these reflections, must be positive if an adolescent is to adjust to the stresses of leaving home for the first time, full time employment and other pressures associated with early adulthood. The importance of positive self-esteem during late adolescence and early adulthood is said to be evident when viewed in relation to delinquency, depression, academic achievement and other variables (Richman, Brown & Clark, 1984).

Although an abundance of self-esteem research has involved children and early adolescent samples, little data has been reported on the late adolescent subjects. Furthermore, Richman

et al, (1984) cited McCord who suggests that there have been no studies investigating the effects of gender and parent education of high school students on area-specific self-esteem measures. It is therefore argued that this research void is particularly important since a number of investigators report gender differences in self-esteem.

According to McMahon and McMahon (cited in Richman et al., 1984) there is clear evidence that anxiety is maximized during late adolescence, a time for the establishment of identity, independence, belief system, and life goals. As a result, one might expect teenagers with a strong sense of identity and self-worth to be emotionally healthy individuals while those with low self-esteem will inevitably exhibit maladaptive behavior and that the nature of the maladaptation may, however, vary as to the results of constraints established by the environment.

It is argued that self-esteem levels vary as a function of gender and social class. These factors may influence maladaptive behaviors as expressed by low self-esteem teenagers. There is, it is argued, considerable evidence to show gender and social class differences in adolescent emotional problems. Stark and Traxler (cited in Richman et al., 1984) are of the view that males, relative to females, show greater identity diffusion and Gordon (cited in Richman et al., 1984) suggests that social nonconformity and alienation are more prevalent in lower than in upper social class youth.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter on research methodology includes the research approach that was followed in executing this research study. The research design was identified and explicated. Plans, procedures, and considerations were discussed as part of the broad process of the research design.

One of the challenges experienced by the current researcher was the difficulty to get an appointment with the school principal where the research was to be conducted because he was always busy and had other commitments to attend to. Eventually the researcher managed to get an appointment with him. He agreed that the research be conducted in his school and he was willing to assist the researcher. He then requested that he be informed about the findings of the study when it is completed.

Another challenge that the researcher came across was that grade 10 learners did not want to participate, hence the principal decided to negotiate with the grade 12 learners to be part of the study. Ten grade 12 learners (5 males and 5 females) volunteered to be part of the study after an explanation about the purpose of the study was given by the current researcher.

#### **3.2 Phenomenological approach**

The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific and identify the phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. In the human sphere this normally translates into gathering information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observations, and

presenting it from the perspective of the research participant(s). Phenomenological approaches are based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and of subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insight into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom (Stan, 1999).

### **3.3 Phenomenology defined**

Barker, Pistrang & Elliot (2002) define phenomenology as “*A systematic study of people's experiences and ways of viewing the world.*” These authors clearly state that the term phenomenon is a formal word for perception. Phenomenology thus investigates what reality means to different people and what influences the diverse views. The statement speaks to the natural trend whereby different people may have different views about the same observed occurrence.

Moran (2000) cited Edmund Husserl who views phenomenology as “*Experiences intuitively sizeable and analyzable in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts.*” Phenomenology concerns itself with what is known and not how it is known. The essential element of phenomenology is the conscious state of the mind. Consciousness allows the experience to be scrutinized depending on the subject's comprehension of what they know.



### 3.4 Brief history of phenomenology

Moran (2000) indicated that even though phenomenology was inaugurated by Edmund Husserl, its history dated back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The history of phenomenological movement is not a straightforward sequence of events. It comprises multi-phases which correspond with significant contributors of the era. The history is not hard to follow, but it is rather complicated to comprehend. His argument was that while empiricists are aiming to prove the truth with evidence, both the truth and evidence can be founded. Descartes emphasizes that perception brings about spontaneity to conviction. He also indicated that doubt is inversely proportional to conviction. He refers to certainty as conviction without doubt, meaning that without doubt we are naturally inclined to think that we are certain and this will mean the end of inquiring minds. In defending his sentiments Descartes introduced the theory of internalization and justification. The basic assumption of the theory is that: an idea is an internal form of perception which if not doubted gets defended by the holder.







Frenz Brentano [1838-1917] was a German psychologist and a philosopher. In 1864 he became a Catholic priest (Flew, 1970). Brentano is well-known in the academic arena for his doctrine of intentionality. Brentano's objective was to develop a kind of psychology that will describe the individual's mental awareness of his acts and not explain the causal or genetic factors (Moran, 2000). Intentionality according to Brentano means "*the direction of the mind to an object.*" He emphasized that an object is a prerequisite of an act, if the act is to be conscious of itself. Brentano points out that the intention is informed by three aspects, namely, perception, judgment or belief and approval or disapproval. It is an open secret that Brentano was greatly inspired by Descartes. Brentano called his time a period of theoretical

decline. Being a faithful Descartes follower, he also inspired to reconstruct the then philosophical landscape. He called this a fantastic messianic.

Edmund Gustav Husserl [1859-1938] was a German philosopher and a mathematician. He was a great follower of Franz Brentano. Husserl's objective was to “*develop phenomenology into a pure non-empirical science*” (Flew, 1979) Husserl emphasized that meaning must be based on insight and not a generalized experience. This sentiment is also acknowledged by Moran (2000) who calls Husserl the founder of phenomenology. Moran (2000) states that Brentano prepared the ground and Husserl cultivated phenomenology to be a science with its unique methodology to study pure structures. Husserl's point is the elaboration of Brentano's argument of intentionality into ideal meanings and logic. This elaboration led to criticism of psychologism which ultimately resulted in the conception of phenomenology.

### **3.5 Data analysis: Phenomenological approach**

This study uses a phenomenological approach which follows certain steps. These steps were outlined by Rabbets & Edwards (2001) which comprises of:

-  the identification of a phenomenon
-  the selection of the subjects/participants
-  the first description and protocol
-  repeated reading of protocols in order to make sense of the whole
-  synthesize meaning of units into statements regarding the participant's experience
-  discussion of themes

For the qualitative data collected, the researcher used the analysis which involved the identification of themes and patterns of similarity within qualitative research (Braun & Clark, 2006). It is not grounded in any particular theoretical and epistemological framework and can

therefore be applied across a wide range of qualitative research approaches (Braun & Clark, 2006). These were then grouped into themes and qualitative analysis.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

#### ***3.6.1 Sampling***

Sampling refers to the process of using any portion of a population or universe in research and studying and it as a representation of that population or universe (Kerlinger, 1986). Non-probability sampling was used in this study. Non-probability sampling means that not every element in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 2006).

The advantages of non-probability samples are that they are less complicated and more economical (in terms of time and financial expenses) than probability samples (Huysamen, 2001). In this study, the researcher used the convenience sampling since it was the most common form of non-probability sampling. Convenience sampling involves selecting respondents primarily on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate.

The data was collected from KwaDlangezwa at Ongoye high school. The sample comprised of 10 participants, 5 males and 5 females. In this study, grade 12 pupils can be regarded as the convenience sample in the population of high school learners.

#### ***3.6.2 Instrument for data collection***

In this study self-administered questionnaires were used to gather information on the topic under investigation. This is the type of method where a questionnaire is handed to the respondents to fill in. According to Nueman (1997) the self-administered questionnaire type is advantageous because it is by far the cheapest. However, its shortcoming is that it is

usually too limiting in terms of research questions requiring visual aids, or contingency questions, may not be asked.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data was collected; a phenomenological approach was used to analyze the data. In conjunction with the above approach an interpretive form of analysis was used to extract common themes that emerged from the participants' views (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) are of the view that theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in a research that follows a qualitative route.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Apart from instrumentation and procedural concerns, collecting data from people raises ethical concerns. These include taking care of participants, avoid harming people, having due regard of their privacy, respect them as individuals and not subjecting them to unnecessary research. Permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the University's Ethics Committee and from the Department of Psychology at the University of Zululand. Participants signed an informed consent before taking part in the research study. Confidentiality and anonymity was ensured by excluding the names of the interviewees, schedule and questionnaires. Codes were used instead. Participants were informed about the nature of the study, the procedure of the study and their rights. Bailey (1987) stated that it is important to give a full explanation to participants about the nature of the study, its procedure and their ethical rights. The full explanation of the study was given to the proposed participants and it was emphasized that participation is voluntary.

## **Chapter four**

### **Data analysis and discussion of the findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the presentation of data collected from the research participants. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the analysis of the gathered data. This chapter will also find the best way of interpreting the information provided by the participants. A phenomenological approach was chosen to analyze the data, with the intention of accessing the accurate and clear descriptions of the participants' experiences as well as their views on the concept of self-respect. The analysis of the data provides meaningful insight about the participants' understanding and presentation of the emerging themes found in the raw data. The overall themes will also be integrated with the literature to qualify the research.

#### **4.2 Qualitative data**

Each participant's data is provided below together with the emerging themes arising from their responses.

##### **Participant A (18 year old male)**

1. Definition of self-respect.

*“Means respecting yourself. Take yourself as the most important and special person. And it is whereby you do the positive things”.*

### **Emerging themes for participant (A)**

- Respecting yourself
- Being important and special
- Doing positive things

### **Participant B (18 year old female)**

1. Definition of self-respect.

*“Firstly you have to respect yourself in order to respect others”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (B)**

- Respecting yourself
- Respecting others

### **Participant C (17 year old female)**

1. Definition of self-respect.

*“Self-respect is when you respect yourself. You will be considered respectful when you respect others like your friends at school and your parents”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (C)**

- Respect yourself
- Respect others
- Friends
- Parents

### **Participant D (18 year old female)**

1. Definition of self-respect.

*“Self-respect its when you know yourself and respect who you are, you don’t need people to tell you what to do”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (D)**

- Respect yourself
- Sense of ownership of actions

### **Participant E (20 year old female)**

1. Definition of self-respect.

*“Is to know what you can do and you think you can respect other people when you respect you first. You must know what your friends need but you can respect them”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (E)**

- Respect yourself
- Respecting others and knowing their needs
- Knowing what you can do

### **Participant F (19 year old male)**

1. Definition of self-respect.

*“Self-respect its when you respect each other without looking at the age of the person”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (F)**

- Respect yourself and others
- Age of the person is not viewed as a defining factor

### **Participant G (18 year old male)**

1. Definition of self-respect

*“I define self-respect as something that boost yourself confident every day and also shows how proud you are about yourself”*



### **Emerging themes for participant (G)**

- Confidence
- Taking pride in yourself

### **Participant H (19 year old male)**

1. Definition of self-respect

*“Is to be confident in yourself and do the right things only not doing bad things because of your friends”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (H)**

- Confidence
- Doing good things

### **Participant I (23 year old male)**

1. Definition of self-respect

*“Is to make yourself feel confidence about yourself and be more secure in yourself”*

### **Emerging theme for participant (I)**

- Confidence
- Security

### **Participant J (17 year old female)**

1. Definition of self-respect

“Self-respect is whereby you do something good that’s always comes from your heart”

### **Emerging theme for participant (J)**

- Doing good things which are internalised

### **Participant A (18 year old male)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI’s and violence in school.

*“Social grant, low self-respect and fashion. I think fashion is a major cause”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (A)**

- Social grant
- Low self-respect
- Fashion

### **Participant B (18 year old female)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“They are sleeping with boys without using condoms and they get diseases from each other”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (B)**

- Not using condoms
- Getting diseases from others

### **Participant C (17 year old female)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“Lack of respect, crime, poverty and lack of education about sex”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (C)**

- Lack of respect
- Crime
- Poverty
- Lack of sex education

### **Participant D (18 year old female)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“On my own understanding is the peer pressure from friends and like things that other do. Others practices unprotected sex”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (D)**

- Peer pressure
- Unprotected sex

### **Participant E (20 year old female)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“Because of friends they lose self-respect and others don't know how to respect their self's, that's why there are many unwanted teenage pregnancy”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (E)**

- Peer pressure
- Unwanted pregnancy

### **Participant F (19 year old male)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“Some people get pregnant because of ignorance others because of pressure from friends”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (F)**

- Ignorance
- Peer pressure

### **Participant G (18 year old male)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“Its poverty, peer pressure from friends and family, social grant and unprotected sex”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (G)**

- poverty
- Peer pressure
- Social grant
- Unprotected sex

### **Participant H (19 year old male)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

“It's, stress, bad friends, social grant and drugs”

### **Emerging themes for participant (H)**

- stress
- Peer pressure
- Social grant
- Drugs

### **Participant I (23 year old male)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“Because they don't use condoms and some of them want social grant”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (I)**

- Don't use condoms
- Social grant

### **Participant J (17 year old female)**

2. Understanding of the causes of teen pregnancy, STI's and violence in school.

*“I think its low self-respect and peer pressure from friends”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (J)**

- Low self-respect
- Peer pressure

### **Participant A (18 year old male)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“Gangster, prostituting”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (A)**

- gangster
- Prostitution

### **Participant B (18 year old female)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“You don’t feel comfortable when you are around other people or your friends”*

**Emerging theme for participant (B)**

- Lack of confidence

**Participant C (17 year old female)**

3. Behavior that contribute to low self-respect.

*“I can not do crime in community because that shows low self-respect to community and I will not kill other people that will also show low self-respect”*

**Emerging theme for participant (C)**

- Lack of self respect and community

**Participant D (18 year old female)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“Not engaging themselves in crime, unprotected sex”*



### **Emerging themes for participant (D)**

- Avoiding criminal activities
- Avoiding unprotected sex

### **Participant E (20 year old female)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“When your friends undermine you, you have low self-respect and do bad things”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (E)**

- Low self-esteem
- Doing bad things

### **Participant F (19 year old female)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“It’s to have many partners, drink alcohol and use drugs”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (F)**

- Having many partners
- Alcohol abuse
- Using drugs

### **Participant G (18 year old male)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“It’s smoking cigarette, peer pressure and teenagehood”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (G)**

- Smoking cigarette
- peer pressure
- Challenges of being a teenager

### **Participant H (19 year old male)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“It’s drugs, stress, chicks/girls”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (H)**

- drugs
- stress
- chicks/girls

### **Participant I (23 year old male)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“If you not feel comfortable around people because of spots in your body”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (I)**

- Lack of confidence

### **Participant J (17year old female)**

3. Behaviors that contribute to low self-respect.

*“Behavior of being a drug addict”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (J)**

- drug addiction

### **Participant A (18 year old male)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“By organizing workshops for learners”*

### **Emerging theme for participant (A)**

- workshops for learners

### **Participant B (18 year old female)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“I tell them you must respect all others and you do a right thing”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (B)**

- Empowerment of other learners to respect others and
- doing the right thing

### **Participant C (17 year old female)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“I would tell them that they must respect elders and the community”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (C)**

- Empowerment of other learners to respect elders

### **Participant D (18 year old female)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“They should respect themselves and lesson to their parents, chose friends that you see you belongs to”*

#### **Emerging themes for participant (D)**

- respecting themselves
- listening to their parents
- choice of friends

#### **Participant E (20 year old female)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“You can respect yourself when you know what you need at school and why you are at school”*

#### **Emerging theme for participant (E)**

- respecting yourself and being goal directed

#### **Participant F (19 year old female)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“Yes, will encourage high school learners to practice self-respect and get more information about this”*

### **Emerging theme for participant (F)**

- encouraging other learners to respect themselves and seek for information

### **Participant G (18 year old male)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“attend church, respect yourself, go with good friends and love yourself”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (G)**

- attending church
- respecting yourself
- having good friends
- loving yourself

### **Participant H (19 year old male)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“by organizing the counseling and also join RCL in school”*

### **Emerging themes for participant (H)**

- organising counselling
- joining SCO (Students Christian Organization)

### **Participant I (23 year old male)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“encourage them to feel more good about themselves”*

### **Emerging theme for participant (I)**

- feeling good about yourself

### **Participant J (17year old female)**

4. Perceived strategies to encourage other learners to have self-dignity and self-respect.

*“By joining SCO (Students Christian Organization)”*

### **Emerging theme for participant (J)**

- Joining SCO



### **4.3 Discussion of common emerging themes.**

In this section the researcher looked at common themes that were extracted from participants' responses on their understanding of the concept self-respect. These themes constitute the discussion that follows. The researcher used the phenomenological approach to analyze the responses from the participants. This process resulted in a qualitative description of the participants' experiences and views of the concept of self-respect. This portion of the study looks at summarizing and integrating the emerging themes from the responses of the participants to overall themes, and linking it with theoretical foundations.

#### **4.3.1 Respecting yourself, respecting others and self-confidence.**

A lot of issues come to play when one has to define a controversial topic of what self-respect means to an individual. Most participants felt that self-respect meant, respecting one self and others and self-confidence. These responses gave the researcher a clear idea that learners have an understanding of the concept self-respect. Brown (1998) postulate that when looking at self-respect, one has to have knowledge of the self in order to understand and respect the self and then be able to respect others.

Thus, Middleton (2004) is of the view that there is a sense of personal identities once a person can acknowledge others. Second, feelings, desires and preferences together with influences from collective cultures and structures also play an important part in constructing an individual identity. Self-respect is apparently the foundation for people to be able to identify who they are.

In this regard Middleton (2004) makes reference to some psychologists who argue that, people who present themselves positively have higher 'self-esteem' and they take pride in their confidence.

In that regard Dillon & Edward (2010) stipulate that self-respect states confidence in one's merit as a person, rests on an appraisal of oneself in light of the normative self-conception. Thus, people have and try to live by certain standards of worthiness by which they are committed to judge themselves.

#### **4.3.2 Social grant, peer pressure and unprotected sex.**

These emerging themes revealed that learners are aware of these unacceptable behaviors that cause these social ills. However, it also emerged that some learners engage in these unacceptable behaviors due to the lack of education about such issue.

Insanally (2007) is of the view that the beginning of all personal weakness is in the absence of one word: *self*. When the word *self* is removed from the phrase self-respect a void is left, the void is filled by a variety of desires and expectations. The individual, having become dependent on external forces rather than internal powers, then measures respect by physical and material factors, such as unwanted pregnancies which are increasing in learners at schools. These behaviors indicate that learners are engaging in unprotected sex and exposing themselves to sexually transmitted infections (STI's), HIV/AIDS as well as violence in school

Conflict is initiated when the awareness of one's original nature and the original nature of the others is lacking. As a result, external negative influences rule supreme over respect. To be secure in the elevated stage of the self, the person should ensure genuine respect for the self and for others. Furthermore, every human being has an innate worth which is pure and virtuous. Such a mindset guarantees ultimate victory, since interaction on such basis ensures that the inherent goodness of the self and from others emerges (Kretzmer & Klein, 2002).

#### **4.3.3 Crime, unprotected sex and drugs.**

As argued by Middleton (2004) people tend to present themselves differently in different situations and they are aware of that. By doing so, they are not pleasing other people, but they are presenting themselves with a less important or greater degree of confidence depending on the situation.

An abundance of self-esteem research has involved children and early adolescent samples, little data has been reported on the late adolescent subjects. Furthermore, McCord (cited in Richman et al, 1984) suggests that there have been no studies investigating the effects of gender and parent education of high school students on area-specific self-esteem measures. It is therefore argued that this research void is particularly important since a number of investigators report gender differences in self-esteem.

According to McMahon and McMahon (cited in Richman et al, 1984) there is clear evidence that anxiety is maximized during late adolescence, a time for the establishment of identity, independence, belief system, and life goals. As a result, one might expect teenagers with a strong sense of identity and self-worth to be emotionally healthy individuals while those with low self-esteem will inevitably exhibit maladaptive behavior and that the nature of the

maladaptation may, however, vary as the results of constraints established by the environment.

It is argued that self-esteem levels vary as a function of gender and social class. These factors may influence maladaptive behaviors as expressed by low self-esteem teenagers. There is, it is argued, considerable evidence to show gender and social class differences in adolescent emotional problems. Stark and Traxler (cited in Richman et al, 1984) are of the view that males, relative to females, show greater identity diffusion and Gordon (cited in Richman et al, 1984) suggests that social nonconformity and alienation are more prevalent in lower than in upper social class youth.

#### **4.3.4 Organizing workshops, counselling, respecting others/elders, respecting themselves, join SCO/RCL and attend church.**

These are the themes that emerged and they basically point out the perceived strategies to encourage learners to have self-respect. Empowerment seems to be the most common need for these learners. Parvin (1993) outlines that Gilligan stipulate her own stage theory of moral development for women. Like Kohlberg's, it has three major divisions: pre-conventional, conventional, and post conventional. But for Gilligan, the transitions between the stages are fueled by changes in the sense of self rather than in changes in cognitive capability.

Kohlberg's approach is based on Piaget's cognitive developmental model. Gilligan's theory is based on a modified version of Freud's approach to ego development. Thus Gilligan is combining Freud (or at least a Freudian theme) with Kohlberg & Piaget.

Here is my pitch for the psychologically interesting. Gilligan has shown that Kohlberg's (and Freud's, and Erickson's) systems are based on a male-centered view. Kohlberg built his theory

based on interviews with males only. She has certainly shown us the inadequacy of that. In addition, she has broken the idea that there is only one dimension of moral reasoning. If there can be two, why not three? Why not several? Finally, she has connected moral decision making back into concerns about both the self and the social environment in which the self lives (Parvin, 1993).

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations**

This chapter covers a discussion of the emergent data reported in the results' section in relation to the reviewed literature as well as the findings that were obtained from the themes that were gathered from the qualitative analysis of the data gathered. This chapter concludes with recommendations regarding future research and programs to educate learners about the explication of the meaning of self-respect amongst high school learners.

#### **5.1 Summary of the findings**

This section presents the summary of the findings in accordance with what the data analysis in chapter four revealed. The findings reveal that learners have a general understanding of self-respect even though individual learners differ in this regard. The majority of the learners revealed that self-respect means respecting one self and others. Also, others explain it as having self-confidence and respecting one's body. Furthermore, other learners mentioned that self-respect comes from home, parents as well as from friends.

These findings are consistent with the argument posed by Mkhize (2004) when he explains that the notion of self-respect as internalization of the ethical-moral process. Notably, internalization is viewed as an indispensable part of becoming a person which is equated with the development of self-understanding. It should be noted that self-understanding is viewed as emerging against the background of social practices provided by the culture at large. Shotter cited in Mkhize (2004) argues that internalization involves an ethical-moral transformation of the self. In learning how to be responsible member of a certain social group, one must learn to do certain things in the right kind of way; how to perceive, think,

talk, act, and to experience one's surroundings in ways that make sense to the others around him or her in ways considered legitimate.

This concurs with Brown's (1998) explication that when looking at self-respect, one has to have knowledge of the self in order to understand and respect oneself. There are many sources of self knowledge that we can look at. Brown's (1998) views on the self relate to the physical reality which provides the individual meaning by which he or she can learn about oneself.

It also emerged that a majority of learners agree that peer pressure does compromise their values, beliefs, and self-respect. This also concurs with the findings that learners agree that friends would encourage them to engage in high risk behaviors. The literature reviewed also revealed that other people define self-respect in accordance with what other people expect from them and by so doing they prevent themselves from being who they truly are inside.

Another important element that emerged in the findings was that a majority of learners agree that the lack of self-respect results in teenage pregnancy, STI's and violence in schools. This concurs with Hall's (cited in Brown & Clack, 1984) observation that the 'storm and stress' period of adolescence, physical and sexual maturation, social development, a consideration of life-goals and the establishment of a personal identity all create a conflict and stress in the adolescent's development and that the most critical outcome of adolescence development is an appreciation of self. Additionally, positive feelings about oneself are associated with self-evaluation of one's own qualities, abilities and behavior.

According to (McMahon & McMahon cited in Richman et al., 1984) there is clear evidence that anxiety is maximized during late adolescence which is a time for the establishment of identity, independence, belief system, and life goals. Moreover, it is at this stage that one might expect teenagers with a strong sense of identity and self-worth to be emotionally healthy individuals while those with low self-esteem will inevitably exhibit maladaptive behavior. It is argued that the nature of the maladaptation may, however, vary as a result of constraints established by the environment.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to find out what learners understand by the concept 'self-respect'. Various factors emerged in terms of the learners understanding of the meaning of the concept of self-respect. The most common understanding that they have is respecting yourself and others, self-confidence, success, and it comes from home, parent, friends and people around them in the community. This gives the idea that some or rather most of the learners have an understanding of the meaning of the term 'self-respect'.

It also emerged that learners understand that lack of self-respect results in unacceptable behaviors that might lead to teenage pregnancy, STI's as well as violent behaviors at school. This concurs with what (McMahon & McMahon cited in Richman et al., 1984) that high school learners begin to ask question like who they are? This suggests that, at this point in their lives they are easily influenced by their peers either to respect themselves or to engage in behaviors that show lack of self-respect. It further emerged that in the findings from the questionnaire that females are the ones that have more or better understanding of the aspect of self-respect than males.



### **5.3 Recommendations**

This section deals with the recommendations for further research and enhances the knowledge of learners around the meaning of self-respect.

1. It is recommended that more research be conducted around this topic so that findings can be gathered and compared in order to monitor the progress around the knowledge or information around this subject.
2. Also more research should be done for the purpose of literature
3. It is recommended that workshops be conducted in schools to enhance the knowledge of learners around the meaning of self-respect and minimize unacceptable behaviors.
4. Furthermore, educators at schools, especially Life Orientation educators, should engage more with learners and find out from them what are the areas of concern in their age and life.

### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

This section focuses its attention on possible limitations. The limitations were perceived to be in the following areas:

1. The findings of this study are limited to a particular sample which has some common characteristics. Caution should therefore be exercised when attempting to generalize the findings to the greater grade 10, 11 and 12 from different high schools.

2. Literature was very limited in terms of self-respect and the literature that was gathered comes from related topics like self-esteem and self-confidence.
3. The amount of time that was given to the researcher by the school principal was very limited because data was collected at the time of preparations for the examinations.

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Appendix A  
Consent form

I am Nokuthula Siphiwokuhle Belle, a Master's student in Counselling Psychology. You are being requested to participate in the study that seeks to understand students' views on the concept of self-respect in high school learners. This study is required for my Master programme.

If you agree to participate in this study; please take note of the following before giving your consent (by signing the form):

- I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any stage should I feel uncomfortable.
- I understand that this study will contribute to scientific knowledge that will be useful to help others.
- I understand that all information collected will be confidential.

I have read the above and give my consent to participate in this study and also agree that I will fill in the questionnaire and hand it over to the researcher.

.....

Signature of the participant

.....

Date

.....

Place



Appendix B  
Questionnaire

The phenomenological Explicadtion of the Meaning of the concept Self-respect in High School Learners.

Instructions to participants

1. Please read through each statement carefully before giving your opinion.
2. Please make sure you do not omit a question or skip a page.
3. Please be honest when giving your opinion.
4. Please return the questionnaire on completion.

Kindly answer all the questions by supplying the requested information in writing.

Thank you for your cooperation

This research intends to seek for your understanding on the Phenomenological Explication of the meaning of the concept ‘Self-respect’ in High School learners.

#### Biographical Data

Age.....

Grade.....

Gender.....

Home language.....

Define self-respect.

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According to your understanding what are the causes of teenage pregnancy, STI's, and violence in schools?

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Name any behaviors that one can not engage in because they show low self-respect.

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How would you encourage high school learners to practice self-dignity and self-respect?

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Thank you!

