

CHAPTER 6

OVERVIEW, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Self-evaluation is a person's assessment of his/her behaviour, possibilities and attitudes, according to personal standards and values. Self-evaluation therefore always carries an element of subjectiveness. It was the aim of this study to determine how Venda adolescents evaluate themselves regarding the different dimensions of the self. For this purpose, a theoretical as well as an empirical investigation was executed. The final findings and recommendations of the study will henceforth be discussed.

6.2 FINDINGS OF THE INVESTIGATION

6.2.1 Literature study

6.2.1.1 *Definition of personality*

From the study, more than 50 different definitions of personality could be identified. The main definitions are sampled as follows:

- Personality is the totality of all the physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics that determine the behaviour of an individual.
- Personality refers to whatever it is that makes a person who he/she is or which allows us to make predictions about a specific person's behaviour.
- Personality is that which makes it possible to predict what a person will do in any given situation.
- Personality is the relatively permanent patterns of repetitive interpersonal situations which characterise a person's life.

- Personality is a more or less stabler and permanent organisation of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique which will determine a person's unique adaptation to the environment.
- Personality is the sum total of the ways in which man will characteristically react to and interact with others.
- Personality is a continuation of all relatively stable dimensions by means of which a person can be evaluated.

From the seven definitions of personality given above, it is clear that personality is closely connected with the behaviour of human beings. It also became evident that a person can be evaluated by means of his/her personality. In the study of self-evaluation by the Venda adolescent, it is necessary to include the definitions of the terms "personality" and "personality theories". It would not be possible to study self-evaluation without including the definitions of personality.

The concept of personality is the sum of intrinsic traits, characteristics and consistent attitudes that identify an individual as unique. From the literature study, it has been noted that of all the people who inhabit the earth, no two are exactly alike. They will differ in their personalities.

The fact that there are so many definitions of personality today, coupled with the fact that each individual is unique, gives us an overall impression that personality is a complex phenomenon for which there are no simple explanations. It seems unlikely that there will ever be an era where a single definition of personality will be acceptable to all, but perhaps further research may prove otherwise.

6.2.1.2 *Personality theories*

In chapter 2, personality theories were grouped into the following four classes:

- The depth psychological approach: Behaviour is determined by forces within a person, of which a person is mostly unaware. Emphasis is put on the deep, unconscious aspects of the

personality. The nature of a human being is dualistic: on the one hand, there is conscious functioning and, on the other hand, there is unconscious functioning.

- The learning theory approach: Learning and environment are regarded as the most important factors in the development of personality.
- The dimensional approach: The general view of this approach is that a human being has many different behavioural tendencies. The physical structure theorists argue that the physical build or appearance of a person will have a close connection with the personality of that person. Their argument is that, as the individual is on the outside, so he/she will also be on the inside. This means that the personality of a person resembles the outlook of that person.
- The humanistic approach: Human beings are influenced and guided by the personal meanings they attach to experiences. Biological drives are minimised while goals and perceptions are maximised. The following concepts are embedded in this psychology, namely self-actualisation, self-fulfilment and self-realisation.

The four personality theories stated above all concentrate on the subject of the human being. The behaviour of human beings through the different ages has been discussed. The conclusion we can draw from the personality theories is that it would seem that, from the days of Freud to the days of Frankl today, it is evident that there is no single personality theory which can be regarded as the correct or even the wrong one.

There is not one personality theory that can be condoned or be condemned. There are many personality theories and some are totally different from others. Some personality theories are clearly contradicting others, and they seem to have been influenced; by the era in which their theorists lived. Hopefully, new personality theorists will emerge with new perspectives the overall impression we get about personality theories is therefore that they all offer different perspectives of personality.

Though there are many different personality theories, they have one thing in common, namely that they provide the psychologist with a concept of the human being, which is a precondition for an evaluation of personality.

6.2.1.3 *Self-evaluation by the black adolescent*

With regard to black adolescents, the literature study has revealed the following findings:

- Black boys are slightly taller than their white counterparts at the ages of 7 to 9 years.
- Black boys are slightly shorter than their white counterparts at the ages of 10 to 12 years.
- The mean weights of black girls are greater than those of white girls from the ages 11 to 15 years.
- Black adolescents prefer an endomorphic type of physique (white adolescents prefer an ectomorphic and mesomorphic type).
- Black adolescents of educated parents performed academically at the same level as adolescents from any other race group.
- Black and white adolescents performed alike on conservation of continuous and discontinuous quantities.
- On average, black adolescents performed like any Western adolescent both qualitatively and quantitatively.
- Black adolescents' perception of themselves are similar to those reported by adolescents in European countries.

From the literature study, we can draw the following conclusion:

The difference between black and white adolescents is mainly physical, for example colour, but with regard to the other aspects, black and white adolescents are similar. There is no notable difference worth mentioning with regard to the other dimensions of the self. From the literature study, there was no real evidence that suggested that there is any significant difference between the self-evaluation of white and black adolescents. Research findings in Europe, North America, Africa and Australia, for example by Mwamwenda (1995), could not find any significant difference between the self-evaluation of white and black adolescents.

We can therefore assume with a reasonable degree of certainty that there is no difference between the self-evaluation of black adolescents as compared to that of other population groups.

6.2.1.4 *Self-evaluation as the core of personality*

From the literature study, it has been evident that self-evaluation (how I evaluate myself) leads to a positive or negative self-concept (what I think of myself). It is also evident that self-concept and self-evaluation are inseparable. They can only be identified for study purposes. My self-concept will determine my personality. Self-evaluation will also determine my personality. The overall impression we get about self-evaluation and self-concept is that both constitute the core of personality.

The self-concepts (identify, action and self-esteem), self-esteem, self-evaluation and personality each refer to a particular component of our total being and are interrelated. The concepts mentioned above can never be separated. They can just be identified for study purposes. The self is part of us of which we are consciously aware, self-concept is the cognitive part of the self, self-evaluation is a basic component of self-perception. Self-perception forms the basis of self-esteem. Self-esteem is the affective part of the self; we do not only have ideas, but we also have feelings about who we are, and that is the extent to which we value the self. From the above emerges a personality, and that is why one personality will be totally different from another.

What I think of myself (self-concept) will determine my personality. How I will evaluate myself (self-evaluation) will also determine my personality. As explained above, self-evaluation, just like self-concept, is the very core of personality. It is evident that personality is centred around the self, self-concept, self-esteem and self-evaluation. Each concept refers to a particular component of our total being and cannot be separated from each other.

6.2.2 Findings from the empirical investigation

One of the aims of the empirical investigation was to determine how Venda adolescents evaluate themselves. After the necessary permission was obtained to launch the investigation at selected schools

in Venda, a self-evaluation questionnaire (SEQ) was developed to use as an instrument in the investigation. The SEQ was then applied to a selected sample of adolescents, norms were established and a final group of adolescents and their parents and teachers were then selected for the final phase of the investigation. After the necessary statistical analysis(See chapter 5) was applied to the gathered data, the following results emerged:

- Firstly, the SEQ meets the statistical requirements as a reliable and valid instrument for the purposes it has been designed for.
- Secondly, the adolescents rated (evaluated) themselves significantly higher/more favourable on all six dimensions of the self (namely the physical self, the social self, the academic self, psychological self, the family self and the value self) than their parents and teachers. However, no significant difference was found between the average scores of the parents and teachers. This was the case for all six dimensions of the self. It seems therefore that parents and teachers are in agreement as far as their evaluation of the Venda adolescents is concerned.

Where adolescents, for example, regard themselves as more attractive than their friends, as honest and churchgoing people, as being popular amongst others, as maintaining good relationships with relatives, et cetera, parents and teachers have been less favourable in their judgement of the same adolescents.

The most important conclusions we can draw from the findings of the research are as follows:

- Venda adolescents tend to evaluate themselves more favourable than their parents and teachers. We can assume with a significant certainty that Venda adolescents are not realistic in their evaluation of themselves, but that has to be verified through further research.
- The opinions of teachers and parents can be regarded as reliable and important as far as the evaluation of Venda adolescents is concerned. This means that where it is not possible to measure the self-evaluation of Venda adolescents, the opinions of parents and teachers can be accepted as reliable in this regard.

6.3 SHORTCOMINGS AND PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY

6.3.1 Shortcomings

- Shortage of literature: Ample literature is available regarding adolescents in general, but little can be found as far as the Venda adolescent is concerned. The most relevant and prominent literature in this regard is the research done by Ramalebana (1995).
- Gender and age: These two factors have not been considered in the analysis of the data. It might have revealed interesting and valuable information.
- The research cannot prove without doubt that self-evaluation by the Venda adolescent is unrealistic, although it can be assumed with significant certainty that it is the case. But the fact that in all instances where the null hypothesis was rejected, the mean of the adolescents was significantly higher than that of teachers and parents, proves that adolescents rated themselves unrealistically higher than they actually are.

6.3.2 Problems encountered in the course of the study

Venda is heavily rural and roads are bad and dusty. Driving a car to some of the schools was not easy. Many roads are never repaired. The area is mountainous and many roads are rocky. Some of the schools that the researcher visited to deliver questionnaires are without telephones. The only way of communication with such schools was by driving to the schools on the first visit to arrange with the principals. Some of the principals and educators had cellphones and therefore the second visit was easy as appointments were made through cellphones.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.4.1 Aspects for further research

We cannot categorically state that parents and teachers were realistic and that adolescents were unrealistic, but the fact that in all instances where the null hypothesis was rejected, the means of the learners were significantly higher than those of their parents and teachers, gives us a clue of which group or groups could have been realistic and which ones were not. The fact that where teachers and parents evaluated the same adolescent, no significant difference was obtained, further confirms the assumption that parents and teachers are possibly realistic while the adolescents are unrealistic.

It is known a fact that academic performance and achievement in Venda are generally low, but learners still allocated a significantly high score for themselves on items relating to academic achievement, while parents and teachers evaluated learners less favourable in this regard.

Concerning the value self, adolescents evaluated themselves significantly higher compared to parents and teachers. But it is a known fact that teenage pregnancies and schoolgirl motherhood are significantly high in Venda (this has been indicated in chapter 3 of this study). By giving themselves significantly higher scores on value self, adolescents were, in fact, denying that they did things which they would regret later. Parents and teachers, on the other hand, indicated that adolescents indeed did things they would regret later, by giving them low scores on the value self. The evaluation of adolescents by parents can probably be trusted. The pattern is the same for other dimensions of the self.

It is recommended that further research should concentrate on the influence of gender on self-evaluation. The possibility exists that if boys and girls are evaluated separately, a significant difference may be found as far as their self-evaluation is concerned. Rural and urban adolescents may evaluate themselves differently as a result of the differences in family backgrounds, demographic factors, homogeneity of rural people and heterogeneity of urban people. Researchers in future investigations should try to examine the self-evaluation process over an extended period of time and with a variety of methods and measures. Future investigations could lead to the development of a clear process of teaching adolescents to become self-critical.

6.4.2 For the Department of Education

Historically, matric (Grade 12) results of the Limpopo Province rate amongst the worst in the country. The actual reasons for these poor results may stem from a variety of causes, including an unrealistic evaluation of own abilities amongst the Venda adolescents (Grade 12). The following recommendations could possibly be made to the Department of Education:

- Programmes should be developed to help learners develop a realistic assessment of themselves. This can be done through proper assessment of aptitude, intelligence, interest and personality of the Venda adolescent population.
- Guidance and life orientation should be intensified. School guidance is, in fact, education and therefore should render assistance or support to a child in his/her development towards self-actualisation and self-realisation.
- It is recommended that the Department of Education find a practical way of helping learners with their selection of subjects (learning areas) as early as in Grade 9. Many learners seem to make uninformed choices of subjects in Grade 10.
- It is recommended that the Department of Education should intensify career guidance days and career exhibitions. These may start at a regional level, then expand to the districts and then go on circuits. Schools may also be clustered together for career exhibitions.

6.5 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Through a process of self-evaluation, one discovers one's abilities, potential, strong and weak points, et cetera. A realistic analysis of the self is important in order for a person to fulfil his/her role in society. This study revealed that the Venda adolescent tends to evaluate himself/herself in a highly positive and favourable manner, more so than the parents and teachers of the same adolescent. The possibility exists that Venda adolescents are not realistic in the evaluation of their own abilities and attributes. The recommendations as suggested in this study should therefore be regarded as very important when the future of the Venda adolescent is taken into consideration.