

## Chapter 7

### Discussion of the results

This chapter provides a general discussion of the research findings in relation to the literature review and in accordance with the hypotheses, postulates and expected results. Firstly, the psychometric characteristics pertaining to the reliability (internal consistency) and validity (construct and predictive validity) of the Individualism and Collectivism Scale (IS/CS) scores, and the five Semantic Differential Scale (SDS) Attitude scores, for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups, will be discussed. This will be succeeded by a discussion of the results pertaining to each hypothesis. The results of the IS/CS value scores, and the SDS attitude scores will be presented separately. For reference purposes, the research findings for each hypothesis will be discussed individually to indicate whether the null-hypothesis (Ho) or the alternative hypothesis (Ha) has been supported by the data for a particular variable. An outline with regards to the limitations of the study will also be provided.

#### 7.1 The psychometric characteristics of the research instruments

##### 7.1.1 Postulates 1.1 and 1.2: Construct validity and reliability of the IS/CS

With reference to the postulates and the rationales pertaining to the construct validity of the IS and CS, the findings indicated that one single factor solution explained more than 50% of the total variance of the IS and CS scores separately. The reliability of the principal factors for the IS and CS scores, viz. **.75** and **.76** respectively, demonstrated a relatively high consistency of measurement.

The IS and CS scores demonstrated adequate factor structures, and all of the items comprising the IS and CS separately loaded higher than .30 on the principle factors extracted for each case. Thus, postulates 1.1 and 1.2, with regards to the construct validity of the IS and CS, were accepted.

In support of **Postulate 1.1**, and the rationale pertaining to this postulate, such findings indicated that Individualism, and not more than one factor, viz. a cultural value-orientation, accounted for the majority of the variance explained for the IS scores for the total sample. In support of **postulate 1.2**, and the rationale pertaining to this hypothesis, the findings indicated that Collectivism, and not more than one factor, viz. a cultural value-orientation, accounted for the majority of the variance explained for the CS scores for the total sample.

**In conclusion**, the results of the factor analysis of the IS and CS are significant, since **73%** of the total variance for the IS scores, and **75 %** of the total variance for the CS scores was explained by a single factor, and not more than one factor, viz. a cultural value-orientation.

### **7.1.2 Postulate 2: The construct validity and reliability of the Semantic Differential Scale (SDS)**

With reference to the postulate and the rationale pertaining to the construct validity of the SDS Scale, the findings indicated that one principal factor explained the majority of the variance for the SDS scores pertaining to each of the five cultural-orientation groups included in the questionnaire. Similarities in the factor structures for the principal factors were found for the Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Asian/Indian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) SDS item content. Nine items with factor-loadings = .30, for the four cultural-orientation groups indicated above, were identical in content. These items were: cruel/kind; lazy/hardworking; dishonest/honest; ungrateful/grateful; boring/interesting; unreliable/reliable; cowardly/brave, worthless/valuable; aggressive/harmonious. Differences were found in terms of the factor-loadings of the respective items. This may suggest that the participants perceive Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural-orientation groups in terms of similar dimensions of characteristics. However, each cultural-orientation group is distinguished from the others in terms of the degree to which each dimension is perceived as most characteristic of the group concerned.

In comparison with the Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) SDS, the principal factor for the Indigenous African SDS was characterised by a different set of items, namely: bad/good; unfair/fair; foolish/wise dirty/clean; argumentative/co-operative, rude/courteous, unpleasant/pleasant, unreliable/reliable and disloyal/loyal. This suggests that the participants perceive and evaluate Indigenous African cultural groups in terms of dimensions which they perceive to be more typical of Indigenous African cultural groups, and not characteristic of the other four cultural-orientation groups. Indigenous African cultural groups may thus be perceived as more distinct from the four other cultural-orientation groups, and the Western-Afrikaans, Western-English, Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups may be perceived as more similar to one another in comparison with Indigenous African cultural groups.

Since high reliability coefficients (Cronbach alpha coefficients) were recorded for the principal factors obtained for the SDS pertaining to each cultural group, in the region of **0.87 to 0.91**, one may assume that a fairly accurate reflection of the internal consistency of the SDS items pertaining to each principal factor was indicated. This shows that the SDS pertaining to each of the five cultural-orientation groups, demonstrated a relatively high consistency of measurement in general.

The percentages of the total and common variance for the SDS clearly indicates that the first factors obtained for each culture group plays a dominant role in the participants' evaluations of the cultural groups concerned. A single factor solution explained 50% or more of the variance for the SDS attitude scores pertaining to each of the five cultural-orientation groups. Thus, **postulate 2**, with regards to the construct validity of the SDS, were accepted. In support of **postulate 2**, and the rationale pertaining to this postulate, such findings indicate that a single factor (perceptions of each respective target culture group included in the questionnaire) was responsible for the majority of the variance explained for the total samples' attitude scores on the SDS.

**In conclusion**, the results of the factor analyses are significant, since more than 50% of the total variance for the SDS pertaining to each of the five cultural-orientation groups was largely explained in terms of one single factor, viz. the perceptions of all the respondents in regard to each of the five cultural-orientation groups concerned. The construct validity of the SDS for the five groups were thus supported by the factor analysis.

## 7.2 Between-group comparisons of the IS and CS scores

### 7.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Differences between male and female respondents

Independent t-tests were used to compare the IS and CS scores of the male and female respondents. The t-test results indicated statistically significant differences between the IS scores of the male and female respondents. This value was statistically significant at the **.05 level**. This indicated that the female respondents endorsed a significantly stronger Individualistic-orientation than the male respondents. The t-test results indicated that the differences in the CS scores for the male and female respondents were highly significant at the **.001 level**. Female respondents indicated a stronger endorsement of Collectivism than the male respondents.

The differences in the IS scores of the male and female respondents did not support the expectations with regard to the gender differences for the IS and CS scores. In accordance with the literature, it was expected that the male respondents would be significantly more Individualistic than the female respondents, and that the female respondents would be significantly more Collectivistic than the male respondents (Triandis, 1995; Oyserman, 1993). The CS scores of the male and female respondents were generally in accordance with the theoretical expectations. In view of these findings, the **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 1**, was rejected for both the IS and CS scores for the male and female respondents.

These findings may be attributed to a number of reasons.

Firstly, a strong endorsement of both IS and CS amongst the female respondents compared to the male respondents may suggest that females are more open to value incorporation (acculturation) than males. Secondly, the results may also be indicative of an intense acquiescence or social desirability response set among the female respondents. The strong CS and IS scores amongst the female respondents may suggest that the female respondents endorsed the items without considering the content of each statement. Lastly, these results could also be indicative of spurious findings.

### 7.2.2 Hypothesis 2: Differences between resident and day-students

Independent t-tests were used to compare the IS and CS scores of the resident and day-students. No statistically significant differences in the IS scores of the resident and day-students were indicated. The **null-hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 2**, with regard to the IS scores, was therefore not rejected. These results suggest that the resident and day-students do not differ in terms of their individualistic value-orientations. Both resident and day-students indicated a strong endorsement of Individualism. This may suggest that acculturation within the residences does not promote a stronger individualistic orientation compared to acculturation within the day-houses. A strong endorsement of Individualism amongst both resident and day-students is expected given that university students are typically more exposed to Individualism than the general population (Oyserman, 1993). According to this author, a strong focus on academic achievement, individual accomplishment and competition is likely to cue an individualistic orientation amongst university students in general.

Statistically significant differences in the CS scores of the resident and day-students were noted. Such differences were significant at the **.01 level**. The **null-hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 2**, with regard to the CS scores was therefore rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The results indicated that the day-students had a significantly lower CS score than the resident students, suggesting a stronger endorsement of Collectivism amongst day-students compared to the students within the residences.

It was expected that the resident students would have a stronger endorsement of both Individualism and Collectivism compared to the day-students, due to a greater frequency and intimacy of contact with members of other cultural groups within the residences. The results did not confirm this expectation. The stronger CS score of the day-students in comparison with the resident students may be a reflection of the student population within the residences compared to the day-students. The general population of students within the residences are from a Western cultural-orientation. A greater proportion of

Indian/Asian and Indigenous African students are day-students. The stronger CS score of the day-students in comparison to the resident students may thus reflect a greater proportion of Non-Western oriented students within the student day-houses as opposed to the residences.

### 7.2.3 Hypothesis 3: Differences between the five cultural-orientation groups.

The differences between the IS and CS scores for the five cultural-orientation groups were analysed by means of ANOVA and multivariate tests. This included multiple pair-wise comparisons between the cultural-orientation groups. The broad cultural-orientation groups were classified in terms of the biographical information pertaining to the cultural-orientation with which the respondents identified, as well as the respondents' home-language. As only a small number of respondents indicated that they were from a Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural-orientation, the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Asian cultural groups were combined into one group. In order to accommodate a new sub-group of respondents who identified themselves with a Western cultural-orientation, yet spoke an African language as a first language, a new variable was created. This was referred to as the Westernised-African group. The final cultural-orientation groups included in the analyses were: Indigenous African, Indian/Asian, Western-English, Western-Afrikaans and Westernised -African cultural groups.

The analysis shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the IS scores of the Indian/Asian group and the Westernised-African group. This difference was significant at the **.05 level**. An observation of the mean scores indicated that the Indian/Asian group had a significantly lower mean IS score than the Westernised-African group. This suggested that the Indian/Asian group endorsed a significantly stronger individualistic value-orientation than the Westernised-African group. No statistically significant differences were found between the IS scores for the comparisons of the other cultural-orientation groups. Thus, the **null-hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>)** in reference **hypothesis 3**, with regard to the IS scores, was rejected for the Indian/Asian and the Westernised-African groups, and the **null-hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>)** was not rejected for the comparisons of the other cultural-orientation groups.

The results indicated statistically significant differences in the CS scores of the Indian/Asian group in comparison with the four other cultural-orientation groups. The Indian/Asian group indicated a significantly stronger CS score in comparison to the four other cultural-orientation groups. The differences between the Indian/Asian group and the Western-Afrikaans, the Western-English, and the Indigenous African groups were statistically significant at the **.01 level**, and the differences between the Indian/Asian group and the Westernised -African group was statistically significant at the **.001 level**. This suggests that the Indian/Asian group endorsed a significantly stronger collectivistic value-orientation than each of the other cultural-orientation groups.

A statistically significant difference between the CS scores of the Western-English and Westernised-African groups was indicated. This value was statistically significant at the **.05 level**. The Western-English group had a lower mean CS score than the Westernised-African group. This suggested that the Western-English group endorsed a significantly stronger collectivistic value-orientation than the Westernised-African group.

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 3** with regard to the CS scores, was thus rejected for the comparisons of the Indian/Asian group, and the four other cultural-orientation groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 3**, was not rejected for the comparisons of the CS scores of the Indigenous African group, the Westernised-African group, the Western-English and the Western-Afrikaans groups.

The Individualism and Collectivism results for the five cultural-orientation groups were not in accordance with the theoretical expectations. It was expected that the Western-Afrikaans and the Western-English cultural groups would have a significantly stronger IS score and a significantly weaker CS score than the Indigenous African, the Westernised-African and the Indian/Asian groups. With the exception of the differences between the Indian/Asian and the Westernised-African groups, no significant differences were identified for the other group comparisons. This suggests that with the exception of the differences between the Indian/Asian and the Westernised-African groups, all five cultural-orientation groups held relatively similar individualistic value-orientations. These results are in accordance with the perspective that students attending universities are typically more exposed to Individualism than the general population (Oyserman, 1993). A strong focus on academic achievement, individual accomplishment and competition within universities is likely to cue an individualistic-orientation across diverse cultural groups.

The significantly stronger CS score of the Indian/Asian group in comparison with the four other cultural-orientation groups is generally in accordance with the expectations. Based on comparisons between Western, and Non-Western cultural groups, cross-cultural researchers predict a stronger collectivistic value-orientation amongst Indian/Asian and Indigenous African cultural groups, in comparison with Western cultural groups (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999; Triandis, 1995). The stronger CS score of the Indian/Asian group compared to the Western-Afrikaans and Western-English groups confirms this prediction. However, the stronger CS score of the Western-English group in comparison with the Westernised-African group does not support this expectation. This may reflect a measurement bias such as social desirability and, or acquiescence response sets.

The results of the IS and CS scores for the five cultural-orientation groups appear to suggest that the differences found among the cultural-orientation groups are the result of response tendencies rather than actual differences on the IS and CS scores. The reason for this assumption was based on the observation that each cultural-orientation group appeared to give similar, strong ratings for the two value dimensions. The Indian/Asian group indicated the strongest orientations for the two dimensions and the Westernised-African group indicated the weakest orientations for the two dimensions. This suggests the use of specific response tendencies amongst members of the same cultural-orientation group.

Matsumoto (2000) warns researchers of the effects of cultural response sets on the analysis and interpretations of their research findings. Cultural response sets are tendencies specific to certain cultural groups, which predispose members of those cultural groups to predominantly use only certain parts of a measurement scale when responding to the scale items. This makes it difficult to conduct valid comparisons across groups (Matsumoto, 2000). The cultural response sets identified within the present study may suggest that the comparison of the IS and CS scores of the five cultural-orientation groups is not feasible.

#### 7.2.4 Hypothesis 4: Differences between the three first/home-language groups

The effects of home-language on the participants' IS and CS scores were analysed by means of ANOVA and multivariate tests. This included post-hoc, multiple pair-wise comparisons between the language groups. The language groups included in this analysis were: African, English and Afrikaans first-language speakers. As only a small proportion of students spoke an Indian/Asian or Middle-Eastern (Muslim) language, these respondents were omitted from the analysis.

The results indicated statistically significant differences between the IS scores of the African and the English language groups. This value was significant beyond the **.05 level**. The English group had a significantly lower mean IS score than the African language group. This suggested that the English language group endorsed a significantly stronger individualistic value-orientation than the African language group.

No statistical differences were indicated for the IS scores of the English and Afrikaans language groups, or the African and Afrikaans language groups. The **null-hypothesis (H<sub>04</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 4**, with regards to the IS scores, was thus rejected for the comparisons of the African and English language groups, and the **null-hypothesis** was not rejected for the comparisons of the English and Afrikaans, and the Afrikaans and African language groups.

Statistically significant difference between the CS scores of the English and African language groups were indicated. This value was significant beyond the **.01 level**. The English group had a lower mean CS score than the African language group suggesting that the English group endorsed a significantly stronger collectivistic value-orientation than the African language group. No statistical differences were indicated for the CS scores of the English and Afrikaans language groups, or the African and Afrikaans language groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 4**, with regards to the CS scores, was thus rejected for the comparisons of the African and English language groups, and the **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)** was not rejected for the comparisons of the English and Afrikaans, and the Afrikaans and African language groups.

It was expected that the English and the Afrikaans language groups would have a significantly stronger IS score, and a significantly weaker CS score than the African language group. This assumption is in accordance with the theoretical literature which predicts that Western cultural groups, as reflected by the English and the Afrikaans languages, are predominantly individualistic, and African cultural groups are predominantly collectivistic (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al., 1999).

The stronger IS score of the English group in comparison with the African language group is in accordance with the theoretical expectations. However, the stronger CS score of the English group, in comparison with the African language group, is not in accordance with the theoretical expectations

This again suggests the influence of cultural response sets on the participants' responses. Each language group indicated similar, positively skewed ratings for both dimensions. The English group indicated the strongest scores for both Individualism and Collectivism, and the African language group indicated the weakest scores for both dimensions. This suggests that certain response tendencies were endorsed without thoroughly considering the content of the value statements.

### **7.3 Between-group comparisons for the five SDS scores pertaining to the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups**

#### **7.3.1 Hypothesis 1: Differences between the male and female respondents**

The differences in the **perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups (SDS attitudes)** for the **male and female respondents** were analysed by means of independent t-tests. The results of the t-tests indicated no statistically significant differences between the SDS attitude scores of the male and female respondents for the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans, the Western-English, the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and the Indigenous African cultural groups. Statistically significant differences in the



SDS scores of the male and female respondents were indicated for the perceptions of the **Indian/Asian cultural group**. This difference was statistically significant at the **.05 level**. This suggests that female respondents had significantly more favourable perceptions of the Indian/Asian cultural group than male respondents. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 1**, for the differences between the male and female respondents, was rejected for the perceptions of the Indian/Asian cultural group. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>)**, for the differences between the male and female respondents, was not rejected for the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans, the Western-English, the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and the Indigenous African cultural groups.

The results suggest that the male and female respondents do not differ significantly in their perceptions of the cultural-orientation groups, (with the exception of the perceptions of the Indian/Asian cultural group). The reason for the significantly more favourable perception of the Indian/Asian cultural group, as perceived by the female respondents, in comparison with the male respondents, is unclear. It is possible that the more favourable perception of the female respondents towards the Indian/Asian cultural group is an indication of social desirability.

### 7.3.2 Hypothesis 2: Differences between resident and day-students

Differences in the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups (SDS attitude scores), for the resident and day-students, were analysed by means of independent t-tests. The t-test results indicated statistically significant differences between resident and day-students in the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans and Indigenous African cultural groups. Such differences were significant at the **.01 and .05** levels respectively. Resident students had a significantly more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group and a statistically less favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group in comparison to the day-students.

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 2**, with regard to the SDS attitude scores of resident and day-students, was therefore rejected for the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans and Indigenous African cultural groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>)** was not rejected for the differences between resident and day-students for their perceptions of the other cultural-orientation groups.

These results are contrary to the expectation that students within the residences, who experience a greater frequency of intimate contact with members of other cultural groups, would display more favourable evaluations of the other cultural groups than day-students, who have less intimate contact with other cultural groups.

Mynhardt (2002) notes that contact within the schools and universities in general, are less likely to produce favourable attitude changes than other forms of contact. He attributes this to the contentious nature of the contact within the universities. The competitive learning environment within the universities and the differing social systems of the student populations may not be conducive to positive intergroup relations.

A shortcoming of this study lies in the assumption that there is a greater frequency and intimacy of contact amongst students within the residences compared to day-students. The frequency and intimacy of contact is measured by the proximity of the contact amongst the students within the residences compared to the day-houses. Proximity however does not imply intimacy as students are capable of avoiding intimate, personal relations with members of other cultural groups. Thus, contact within the residences may not be meaningful and conducive to positive intergroup relations. The less favourable attitudes of the resident students, with regard to their perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, may be the result of negative stereotyping occurring within a contentious university environment.

Similar findings to those of the present study were indicated in Jocelyn's (1991) study of intergroup relations amongst students within the residences at the University of Natal. Jocelyn (1991) found that the longer students from a Western cultural group were in a student residence with other African students, the less willing they were to have contact with members of African cultural groups. This implies that close contact (as experienced within the university residences) actually decreased the readiness of Western-oriented students to have contact with African students.

It must be noted that within the present study, the majority of the student population within the residences are from a Western culture. A more favourable evaluation of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group, and a less favourable evaluation of the Indigenous African culture group, as perceived by respondents within the student residences, compared to the day-students, may thus be a reflection of the student population within the residences rather than a result of contact.

Social identity theorists predict that if the status of the in-group is perceived as unstable, members of that group may react by exaggerating the distinctiveness of the in-group in order to distinguish the in-group positively from the outgroup (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Hogg, 2003). In this regard, the less favourable perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, and the more favourable perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group, as perceived by the resident students, may reflect underlying feelings of being threatened by the increasing number of African students within the university. As the majority of the student population within the residences are from a Western-Afrikaans cultural group, the

attitudes of the resident students may thus reflect a need amongst the resident students to distinguish the Western-Afrikaans culture group from the African cultural groups.

In conclusion, it appears that the differences between the resident and day-students may reflect a greater proportion of Western students within the residences and a greater proportion of African students among day-students. In this regard, the attitudes of the resident students are thought to reflect underlying feelings of being threatened by the increasing number of African students within the residences. The less favourable perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group amongst the resident students may also suggest that the contact between the cultural groups within the residences does not foster positive relations between the cultural groups, and thus encourages negative stereotyping of the minority (African) culture.

### **7.3.3 Hypothesis 3: Differences between the five cultural-orientation groups**

The differences between the five cultural-orientation groups in terms of their perceptions of the cultural-orientation groups included in the questionnaire (SDS scores), were analysed by means of ANOVA and multivariate tests. This included multiple pair-wise comparisons between the cultural-orientation groups. The broad cultural-orientation groups were classified in terms of the biographical information pertaining to the cultural-orientation with which the respondents identified, as well as the respondents' home-language. As only a small number of respondents indicated that they were from a Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural-orientation, the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Asian cultural groups were combined into one group. In order to accommodate a new sub-group of respondents who identified themselves with a Western cultural-orientation, yet spoke an African language as a first language, a new variable was created. This was referred to as the Westernised-African group. The final cultural-orientation groups included in the analyses were: Indigenous African, Indian/Asian, Western-English, Western-Afrikaans and Westernised-African cultural groups.

In general, significant differences in the SDS attitude scores for perceptions of Western-Afrikaans, Western-English and Indigenous African cultural groups were found between the cultural-orientation groups (as indicated by the ANOVA and post-hoc test comparisons). No significant differences between the cultural-orientation groups were indicated for the perceptions of the Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups. The **null-hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>)**, in reference to **Hypothesis 3**, was thus rejected for the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans, Western-English and Indigenous African cultural groups. The **null-hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 3**, was not rejected for the perceptions of the Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups.

The greatest degree of variability in the SDS attitude scores of the five cultural-orientation groups was noted for the perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group. The Western-Afrikaans group had a significantly more favourable perception of their own cultural group compared to the Western-English, Indian/Asian and Indigenous African cultural groups' views of them. The Westernised-African group did not however differ significantly from the Western-Afrikaans group or the Western-English group in their perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group. Interestingly, the Westernised-African group had a statistically significantly more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group than the Indian/Asian and Indigenous African cultural groups. The Indigenous African group had the least favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group. Their attitude scores were significantly less favourable in comparison to the Western-Afrikaans, Western-English and Westernised-African groups. The Indigenous African group did not however differ significantly from the Indian/Asian group in their perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group.

With regards to the perceptions of the Western-English cultural group, the Western-English groups' attitudes were significantly more favourable than the Western-Afrikaans and Indian/Asian groups. No significant differences in the perceptions of the Western-English cultural group was found for the English group compared to the Indigenous African, and Westernised-African groups. The four out-groups did not differ significantly from one-another in their perceptions of the Western-English cultural group. There thus appears to be a relatively strong consistency between the cultural-orientation groups in terms of their perceptions of the Western-English cultural group. All five cultural-orientation groups held relatively favourable perceptions of the Western-English cultural group.

With regards to the perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, the Indigenous African group held significantly more favourable perceptions of their own cultural group than the four other cultural-orientation groups' views of them. The four out-groups did not differ significantly from one another in their perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group. Thus, as in the case of the perceptions of the Western-English cultural group, there seems to be extensive consistency amongst the outgroups in their perceptions of the Western-English cultural group.

The cultural-orientation groups did not differ significantly from one another in their perceptions of the Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups. This suggests that there was a fair extent of agreement amongst the respondents in their perceptions of the Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups. The motivation for including two separate scales for the perceptions of the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Indian/Asian cultural groups, was to identify whether the war in the Middle East would influence the attitudes of the respondents towards the two cultural groups. The slightly more favourable perceptions of the five groups towards the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups, in

comparison with the Indian/Asian cultural group, suggests that the war in the Middle-East may have had a slight influence on the respondents' perceptions of Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Asian cultural groups. It is interesting to note that the Indian/Asian group gave almost identical ratings for the Indian/Asian and the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups. This suggests that the Indian/Asian group may have identified equally with both cultural groups.

The patterns of attitudes for the five cultural-orientation groups are similar to those reported in previous attitude studies (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996; Bornman and Mynhardt, 1991; Bornman 1995; 1999; Mynhardt, 2002; Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983; Thiele, 1988). All five cultural -orientation groups differed perceptually in their attitudes towards each of the five cultural-orientation groups included in the questionnaire. Similar to previous studies, the Western-Afrikaans and the Western-English cultural groups provided the most favourable evaluations of their own cultural group, and the least favourable evaluations of the Indigenous African cultural group. It is interesting to note that both Western-English and Western-Afrikaans groups provided similar, favourable evaluations of their own cultural groups, **viz.  $m=5.0356$  and  $5.0867$**  respectively, and reciprocated similar evaluations of one another. Both groups rated one another second to that of their own group, followed by Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural group, the Indian/Asian cultural group, and lastly the Indigenous African cultural group, in order of the most to the least favourable. The Indigenous African group had the most favourable evaluation of the Western-English cultural group, whom they rated on a par with their own group, and provided the least favourable evaluation of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group. The Indian/Asian group was the least ethnocentric of all five cultural-orientation groups. They provided the most favourable perceptions of the Western-English cultural group, the Indian/ Asian cultural group, as well as the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural group, and the least favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group.

Similar to previous attitude studies in South Africa, the Indigenous African and Indian/Asian groups differed perceptually in their perceptions of Western-English and Western-Afrikaans cultural groups. Both groups indicated a more favourable perception of the Western-English cultural group compared to that of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group. These findings are generally in agreement with those of previous attitude studies in South Africa (Bornman & Mynhardt, 1991; Bornman 1995; 1999; Mynhardt, 2002; Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983).

Nieuwoudt and Plug (1983) attribute the more favourable attitudes of the Indian/Asian and African groups towards the Western-English cultural group, to the fact that the Western-English culture provides a reference group for the acculturation of groups within an urbanised society. This may suggest that language is an important source of cultural differentiation in South Africa.

These results provide an indication of the relative stability of group attitudes in South Africa over time (Mynhardt, 2002; Foster & Nel, 1991). The consistency of the results with previous attitude studies in South Africa suggests that the overall pattern of intergroup attitudes amongst the broad cultural groups in South Africa has remained fairly stable over the past 30 years or more. It must however be noted that the majority of the existing attitude studies in South Africa have been conducted using samples of university students. The generalisation of these results to the overall population of South Africa is thus questionable. Nevertheless, studies focusing on students' intergroup attitudes are valuable and necessary as students are likely to be the opinion leaders of the next generation.

The results of the SDS attitude scores provide support for the Social Identity Theory which interpret intergroup attitudes in terms of group processes that are widely shared amongst members of the same social groups (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Aronson et al., 2004; Hogg, 2003; Mynhardt, 2002). Within the present study, the uniformity in the attitudes of members of the same cultural group may be described in terms of the structural arrangements and group identities of the South African population, rather than merely in terms of individual ideas. For instance, the more ethnocentric attitudes of the Western-Afrikaans and Western-English groups, and their less favourable perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, may be regarded as a product of the group position of Western cultural groups in South African society. Western cultural groups occupy a relatively high status in South Africa as a result of their previously advantaged social position. The increasing social position of African cultural groups and the increasing number of African students within the universities may be perceived by the Western cultural groups as a threat to the social status and identity of the in-group.

Social Identity theorists predict that when the status of the in-group is perceived as unstable, group members may react by exaggerating the distinctiveness of the in-group in attempt to distinguish the in-group positively from the out-group (Abrams & Hogg, 2001, Hogg, 2003). In terms of this perspective, the attitudes of the Western cultural groups within the present study may be interpreted as a reaction to a perceived threat posed by African cultural groups, and the need to maintain positive group distinctiveness from the other cultural groups. This idea is supported by a recent study of ethnic identification in South Africa which suggests that a greater social identification amongst the Western-Afrikaans cultural group, in comparison with the African cultural groups, is associated with a greater willingness to protect and preserve the identity of one's cultural in-group (Bornman, 1999).

The pattern of favourable attitudes of the Indian/Asian and Indigenous African groups towards the Western-English cultural group, and the favourable perceptions of the Westernised-African group towards the Western-English and Western-Afrikaans cultural groups, may be interpreted as a form of out-group favourability evidenced by oppressed groups (Foster & Nel, 1991). This may also be

interpreted as a poorer sense of social belonging within a university environment that is dominated by a Western cultural-orientation. The Westernised-African groups' identification with a Western cultural-orientation, as opposed to an African cultural-orientation, and their significantly less favourable perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, in comparison to the Indigenous African group, may also be indicative of out-group favourability.

A fundamental assumption of the Social Identity Theory is that individuals are motivated to enhance their self-esteem by improving their social identity or positive group affiliations. Individuals belonging to low status groups may thus be motivated to improve their social identifications through processes of social mobility, creativity or change. For previously disadvantaged groups having experienced considerable oppression, as the African population in South Africa, individuals may choose to associate themselves psychologically with a higher status group, or they may disassociate themselves from their in-group in order to gain psychological entry into a dominant group. This was evidenced in the present study by the Westernised-African group who identified with a Western cultural-orientation and indicated the highest SDS scores for the two Western cultural groups, and the lowest SDS scores for the Indigenous African cultural group.

The Westernised-African group may have chosen to disassociate themselves from an African culture group in order to maintain a positive social identity, and hence an improved self-esteem. This idea is supported by studies of ethnic identification and self-esteem in South Africa which suggest that a stronger ethnic identification amongst the African cultural groups is associated with a lower self-esteem, in contrast to the Western-Afrikaans cultural group, where a stronger ethnic identification is associated with a higher self-esteem (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996; Bornman, 1995, 1999).

Bornman (1999; 1995) proposed that the more cosmopolitan African culture, with its' multitude of languages and ethnic sub-cultures, may not foster a definite social identity for the African population. This may account for the attitudes of the Westernised-African group.

There is evidence of acculturation amongst the Westernised-African cultural group. The Westernised-Africans did not differ significantly from the Western-English and Western-Afrikaans cultural groups in their perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups. This similarity in perception may be indicative of a similar cultural frame of reference for perceiving and evaluating social groups (Triandis, 1995). The attitudes of the Westernised-Africans may be attributed to the adoption of a Western cultural norm. This finding suggests that further empirical exploration is needed to identify acculturative influences on the perceptions of the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa.

The consistent, shared patterns of attitudes identified amongst members of the same cultural group may provide evidence for the influence of cultural norms on group perceptions. As indicated previously, the Indian/Asian respondents were found to be the least ethnocentric of all the cultural groups, followed by the Indigenous African group. The two Western groups were the most ethnocentric, particularly the Western-Afrikaans group. The less ethnocentric attitudes of the Indian/Asian and Indigenous African cultural groups may be suggestive of an autonomous group orientation in which intergroup comparisons are of less importance than intragroup relations (Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Brown et al., 1992; Yuki, 2003). In contrast, the more ethnocentric attitudes displayed by the Western cultural groups may be described in terms of an intergroup orientation (relational-orientation), and a resulting perception of in-group homogeneity (Hinkle & Brown, 1990; Brown et al., 1992; Yuki, 2003). These findings suggest that further empirical exploration is needed to identify specific group-related cultural norms that could predict specific types of group-orientations and intergroup behaviours.

In conclusion, the ANOVA, and post-hoc test results provide support for previous attitude studies in South Africa, which suggest that the patterns of attitudes amongst the cultural groups have remained relatively stable over time. The more ethnocentric attitudes of the two Western cultural groups, and the less ethnocentric attitudes of the Indian/Asian and African groups are consistent with previous findings. These results provide support for the Social Identity Theory, which describe group attitudes in terms of the structural arrangements and social identities of group members rather than merely in terms of individual ideas. Furthermore, the more ethnocentric attitudes of the Western cultural groups, in comparison to the non-Western cultural groups, suggest that cultural perceptual differences, relating to group-orientations, may exist between the diverse cultural groups in South Africa.

#### **7.3.4 Hypothesis 4: Differences between the three home-language groups**

The differences between the three language groups with regards to their perceptions of the five cultural groups (SDS attitudes), were analysed by means of ANOVA and multivariate tests. This included post-hoc, multiple pair-wise comparisons between the language groups. The language groups included in this analysis were: African, English and Afrikaans first-language speakers. As only a small proportion of students spoke an Indian/Asian or Middle-Eastern (Muslim) language, these respondents were omitted from the analysis.

Significant differences in the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group were indicated for the African and Afrikaans language groups. This value was significant at the **001 level**, which is indicative of a highly significant difference. The results indicated that the Afrikaans group had a significantly more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group than the African language group. No



significant differences in the perceptions of Western-Afrikaans cultural groups were indicated for the comparisons between the African and the English language groups.

A significant difference was indicated for the comparison of the English and Afrikaans language groups in terms of their perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group. This value was significant at the **.001 level**, which is indicative of a highly significant difference. The results indicated that the Afrikaans group had a significantly more favourable perception of their own cultural group than the English group.

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 4**, with regard to the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group, was thus rejected for the comparisons between the African and the Afrikaans language groups, and the Afrikaans and the English language groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)** was not rejected for the comparisons between the African and English language groups.

Significant differences in the perceptions of the Western-English cultural group were indicated for the English and the Afrikaans language groups. This value was significant at the **.001 level**, which is indicative of a highly significant difference. The results indicated that the English group had a significantly more favourable perception of the Western-English cultural group than the Afrikaans group. No significant differences in the perceptions of the Western-English cultural group were indicated for the comparisons of the English and the African language groups and between the African and Afrikaans language groups.

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 4**, with regard to the perceptions of the Western-English cultural group, was thus rejected for the comparisons between the English and Afrikaans groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)** was not rejected for the comparisons between the English and the African language groups and between the African and Afrikaans language groups.

Significant differences in the perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group were indicated for the African and English language groups. This difference was significant at the **.01 level**. The results indicated that the African language group had a significantly more favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group than the English language group. A statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group was also indicated for the comparison of the African and the Afrikaans language groups. This difference was significant at the **.001 level**, which is indicative of a highly significant difference between the groups. The results indicated that the African language group had a significantly more favourable attitude of the Indigenous African cultural group than the Afrikaans group.

A statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group between the English and the Afrikaans groups was indicated. This difference was statistically significant at the **.05 level**. The results indicated that the English group had a significantly more favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group than the Afrikaans group.

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 4**, with regards to the perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, was thus rejected for the comparisons between the African and English language groups, the African and Afrikaans language groups, and the Afrikaans and English language groups.

These results provide support for the influence of language on group perceptions identified in previous attitude studies in South Africa. Cultural differences, as expressed through language, have been found to have a pervasive effect on group attitudes in South Africa (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996; Bornman & Mynhardt, 1992; Bornman 1995; 1999; Mynhardt, 2002; Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983; Thiele, 1988). There is a well-established difference between Afrikaans, English and African language speakers in terms of their degrees of prejudice and ethnocentrism. Afrikaans speakers consistently indicate significantly greater levels of ethnocentrism and prejudice towards African cultural groups than English-speakers. African language groups consistently indicate less favourable perceptions of Western-Afrikaans cultural groups and more favourable perceptions of Western-English cultural groups (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996; Bornman & Mynhardt, 1992; Bornman 1995; 1999; Mynhardt, 2002; Nieuwoudt & Plug, 1983; Thiele, 1988).

The results of the present study are in accordance with the previous attitude studies in South Africa. Within the present study, the Afrikaans and English Language speakers provided the most favourable perceptions of their own cultural group, and the least favourable perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group. The Afrikaans group indicated significantly less favourable perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, in comparison with the English group. The Indigenous African cultural group rated the Western-English cultural group above that of their own cultural group and indicated the least favourable perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group.

These findings serve as a further confirmation of the importance of language, and related cultural differences, in the attitudes and perceptions of the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa.

#### 7.4 Hypothesis 5 and 6: Correlations between the IS/CS scores and the SDS attitude scores

Correlations for the IS and CS scores, and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups were undertaken to identify the relation between the dependent measures, and to determine the feasibility of conducting a regression analysis to predict the effects of the IS and CS scores on the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups independently.

With regard to **hypotheses 5 and 6**, it was expected that there would be a statistically significant correlation between the IS scores and the perceptions of the Western cultural groups, and a statistically significant correlation between the CS scores, and the perceptions of the Non-Western cultural groups.

The correlations of the IS scores and the SDS scores for the perceptions of each of the five cultural-orientation groups independently, indicated no significant correlations. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>5</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 5**, was thus not rejected for the correlations between the IS scores and the perceptions of the Western cultural groups.

A significant correlation was indicated for the CS scores and the perceptions of the Western-English, Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Indigenous African cultural groups. No significant correlation was found for the CS scores, and the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>6</sub>)**, in reference to **hypothesis 6**, was thus rejected for the correlations between the CS scores and the perceptions of the Non-Western cultural groups. The significant correlation between the CS scores and the perceptions of the Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Indigenous African cultural groups are in accordance with the theoretical expectations. These correlations are however extremely low, suggesting that the relation between the CS scores and the perceptions of the four cultural groups is relatively weak.

It was felt that the weak correlations between the value and attitude scores were due to the inconclusive results of the IS and CS scores. The distribution of the IS and CS scores for the total sample were clearly positively skewed, suggesting that the respondents may have endorsed the items without considering the content of the value statements. As a result, the correlations between the cultural values and attitude scores were inconclusive. These findings may also suggest that the specific individualistic and collectivistic attributes that were used in the present study were too general to predict attitudes relating to the broad cultural groups in South Africa.

Values and attitudes are related in the sense that both constructs consist of cognitive beliefs, affective and behavioural components. Values however exist at a higher level of abstraction (Triandis, 1994). Values have strong affective components and may have many attitudes, goals and behavioural intentions that are consistent with them. However, they do not necessarily predispose particular attitudes. Values are more likely to predict attitudes and behaviour when they are specific, and when they are directly related to the attitudes and behaviours in question (Triandis, 1994).

In this regard, it may be useful for the assessment of group attitudes to select specific attributes of Individualism and Collectivism that are relevant to specific types of group relations. An investigation of the type of cultural processes that are likely to influence group perceptions may require the use of more specific measures of cultural variability relating to specific types of inter- and intra-group orientations.

**In conclusion**, the very low correlations for the IS and CS scores, with the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups, suggest that further analysis of the relation between the IS and CS scores with the perceptions of each of the five cultural-orientation groups would not be feasible.

#### 7.5 The limitations with regards to this study



All the results and subsequent interpretations in this study must be seen in the light of the following limitations:

In terms of the subject sample of the study, adequate sample size is important in terms of making generalizations. The sample in the present study attempted to include a representation of the broad cultural-orientation groups within the university. In light of the criticisms of prior research focusing primarily on the attitudes of single ethno-cultural groups, comparisons of the attitudes of students from five broad cultural-orientation groups was ensued. While clearly a result of practical constraints, the sample was still biased in terms of minimal representation from the minority groups of Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Indian/Asian students. The extent to which the findings of this research can be generalized was further limited by the specificity of the sample to first and second year psychology students. This produced a sample of predominantly female students from the Faculty of Arts. A comparatively small proportion of male students, and students from other faculties were included. Consequently, this sample was not representative of the student population within the university.

Certain methodological flaws were identified in terms of the specific IS/CS measure used in the present study. The results of the IS and CS scores for the five cultural-orientation groups and the three language

groups were not in accordance with the theoretical expectations. It was felt that the unexpected findings were largely the result of certain flaws regarding the specific Individualism-Collectivism Scale and the scaling procedures used to rate the responses.

An observation of the IS and CS scores suggested that the participants' responses on both Scale dimensions were skewed towards an extreme positive rating. All five cultural-orientation groups indicated similar, high ratings for both dimensions, suggesting that they may have endorsed the items without necessarily considering the content of the value statements (acquiescence responses). This may be attributed to the wording of the items as well as the specific scaling methods used. The modification of certain test items and the use of a wider rating scale allowing for more variation in the responses, may be necessary.

Although certainly to be viewed as an advantage, one of the most serious criticisms of the present study is its exploratory nature. Lack of clear trends and limited research in the field of individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations amongst the South African population, and the relation between these value dimensions and group perceptions, make predictions and specific hypothesis generation difficult. In the review of the literature pertaining to intergroup attitudes and cross-cultural studies pertaining to intergroup relations, it is evident that there is a lack of clarity and inconsistent findings with regard to cultural variations in intergroup behaviour and perceptions (Smith & Bond, 1998; Yuki, 2003). This study was somewhat unsuccessful in generating a clear understanding of the patterns of individualistic and collectivistic-orientations amongst the various population groups within the present study, as well as the relation between these value-orientations and the perceptions of the broad cultural -orientation groups in South Africa.

In general, low correlations were indicated for the IS and CS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups. It was felt that the weak correlations between the dependent measures was due to the inconclusive results of the IS and CS scores. These findings may also suggest that the specific individualistic and collectivistic attributes that were used in the present study were too general to predict attitudes relating to the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa. The IS/CS items included in the present study were based on a shortened version of the original Triandis et al. (1990) Scale (Gudykunst, 1995). This measure consisted of the most relevant dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism identified by Gudykunst (1995). The scale items referred to a broad range of general individualistic and collectivistic attributes. This measure of Individualism and Collectivism may have been too abstract and general to predict intergroup attitudes which refer to a more specific level of analysis. In this regard, it may be useful to select specific attributes of Individualism and Collectivism that are relevant to specific types of group relations.

A related criticism is that Individualism and Collectivism are merely one of the many possible cultural value domains that have the potential to influence social perception. The use of multi-dimensional cultural value scales may be more appropriate to the study of intercultural/ intergroup perceptions.

Finally, it should be noted that triangulation and replication are central to the validity of the results. This study could have strengthened its conclusions if additional techniques, such as qualitative interviews, had been employed in addition to the administration of the questionnaires.



## Chapter 8

### Summary and Recommendations

This chapter provides a concise summary of the most important aspects pertaining to each chapter of this dissertation. In addition, certain recommendations have been proposed regarding further research on intergroup attitudes in South Africa that may emanate in view of findings appropriate to this study.

#### 8.1 Summary

The contents of each chapter are integrated into a concise summary highlighting the most fundamental aspects of each chapter. Since chapter two and three embody the literature review of this study, several important aspects are delineated in terms of various themes pertaining to these chapters.

##### 8.1.1 Chapter 1: General introduction, problem statement, purpose and the research aims of this study

In chapter one, the reader's awareness is drawn to the importance of intergroup relations within the South African Society, and the need to investigate students' perceptions of the broad cultural groups in South Africa, as well as factors that may influence these perceptions. Given the multicultural nature of the South African society, and the importance of intergroup relations, there is a need to understand the type of variables that influence attitudes and perceptions of other cultural groups.

An area of research that has been neglected in previous attitude studies, is that of the influence of cultural perceptual styles, values and acculturation. The link between cultural values and intergroup attitudes may in itself carry a considerable conflict potential and may have an important influence on group perceptions. Cross-cultural theorists maintain that researchers need to assess cultural values and their relative acculturative influences on the individual in order to draw appropriate conclusions about the sources of cross-cultural variations in behaviour (Smith & Bond, 1998; Segal et al., 1999). In terms of this perspective, the study of intergroup attitudes should take account of differences in values and cultural perceptual styles that form the foundation of social perception.

Accordingly, the **purpose of this study** was based on investigating attitudinal and related variables for the diverse cultural groups of volunteer students in the residences, and day-students (non-resident students) at the Rand Afrikaans University.

More specifically, the aims of the study were to explore the relation between cultural perceptual style, in terms of core value-orientations (Individualism and Collectivism), gender, intensity and frequency of contact (resident vs. non-resident students), and the perceptions of the five broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa present on the RAU campus.

### 8.1.2 Chapters 2: Definition and discussion of the main concepts

Chapter 2 of this dissertation consists of a **definition and discussion of the pertinent concepts** in this study. This includes:

- Attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination
- Culture
- Cultural values
- Individualism and Collectivism
- Acculturation
- Social identity and intergroup relations
- Inter/cross-cultural relations in South Africa

This chapter highlights the complexity of cultural differences, and the value of Individualism and Collectivism for understanding cultural variations in social behaviour .

The **dimensions of Individualism/ Collectivism** were discussed as a prominent feature in cross-cultural psychology. These dimensions correspond to cultural values that are instrumental in social arrangements, norms, attitudes and beliefs of any given society. They describe the relationship between individuals and their social groups (Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis, 1995).

It was noted that the value of Individualism and Collectivism in cross-cultural research is its effectiveness in predicting social behaviour and its ability to explain intergroup phenomena such as cultural distance, the selfconcept, and the perception of the in-group versus the out-group (Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis, 1995). Such constructs provide a basis from which cross-cultural comparisons can be made.

It has been suggested that definitions of the in-group, the value assigned to the in-group, and behaviour towards the out-groups are strongly related to individualistic and collectivistic value-orientations (Matsumoto, 2000; Segall et al, 1999; Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Collectivists usually belong to relatively few, valued in-groups with which they identify strongly, and which provide a source



of norms, identity, and social support, while individualists belong to several in-groups simultaneously (Matsumoto, 2000; Triandis, 1995).

It was concluded that the cultural dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism may provide insight into the fundamental cultural differences amongst the student populations, and that these dimensions may play a central role in the perceptions of the broad cultural groups in South Africa.

**Acculturation** was discussed as an important source of influence on an individuals' perception of other cultural groups. It was noted that acculturation often brings about cultural diversification and attitudinal reaction, such as in-group/out-group favouritism, or greater cultural empathy and tolerance (Berry et al., 1992; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Segall et al., 1999). In view of the relevant literature, it was concluded that acculturations amongst students, in terms of the adoption of some of the values that are central to the other cultural groups, may produce a more favourable perception of the other cultural group.

### 8.1.3 Chapter 3: Literature review

Chapter three consists of an overview of the social psychological literature as it pertains to intergroup relations and perceptions of other cultural groups. The central themes in this chapter were that of **social identity** and **contact**. These were discussed in terms of the **Theory of Social Identity** and the **Contact Hypothesis**.

The value of the **Social Identity Theory** is that it looks at intergroup phenomena at the analytic level of the social groups. Intergroup attitudes are seen as broadly shared or consensual within social groups. The Social Identity Theory thus specifies the social parameters and normative patterns that give rise to particular intergroup attitudes (Aronson et al., 2004; Hogg, 2003). Within the framework of the social identity theory, intergroup attitudes were discussed in terms of the processes of social categorisation in which people are classified on the basis of certain characteristics. The central tenet of this perspective is that categorization and social comparison generates specific group behaviours such as intergroup differentiation, in-group favouritism, and stereotypic perceptions of the in-group and the out-group. These processes are rooted in the desire for individuals to maintain a positive social identification with the in-group and a positively valued distinctiveness from other groups (Aronson et al, 2004; Hogg, 2003).

It was concluded that the Social Identity Theory is of particular relevance to South Africa where rigid group boundaries have been drawn on the basis of ethnic and cultural markers. In the South African context, cultural group memberships provide individuals with norms and boundaries that are responsible

for producing particular forms of social behaviour, such as group solidarity, cohesiveness and group favouritism. This may be very vivid in the case of students living in close proximity to members of other cultural groups.

In view of the findings of cross-cultural studies pertaining to intergroup relations, it was noted that a central limitation of the Social Identity Theory is that it does not account for cultural variations in group-orientated behaviours. Research based on the Social Identity Theory has largely ignored cross-cultural effects, such as the influence of subjective culture and underlying core values. Studies assessing intergroup attitudes assume that the populations they are assessing are homogeneous in terms of their underlying values and perceptual styles. In the South African context, it is likely that members of different cultural groups are not homogeneous, particularly in terms of cultural value-orientation and degree of acculturation. Consequently, it is possible that studies assessing for example intergroup attitudes in African populations, as compared to Western populations, may make over-generalizations if these studies do not control for differences in cultural values and levels of acculturation.

In this regard, a number of variations in group behaviours and perceptions between individualistic and collectivistic cultures were discussed. It was concluded that the dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism may provide an indication of the cultural perceptual styles that are likely to influence perceptions of one's own and other cultural groups.

The importance of qualitative cross-cultural contact conditions for the improvement of group attitudes was discussed in terms of the Contact Hypothesis. The rationale underlying the **social Contact Hypothesis** is that given certain criteria, intercultural contact leads to more positive attitudes towards the out-group (Mynhardt, 2002).

The importance of investigating the influence of contact on students' perceptions of other cultural groups in South Africa was discussed in terms of the limited opportunities for qualitative contact with other cultural groups during the previous South African constitution. In view of the conditions for positive attitude change stipulated by the Contact Hypothesis, it was predicted that the greater frequency and intimacy of contact amongst students within the residences compared to non-resident students, would produce more favourable attitudes of the diverse cultural groups.

**In the conclusion** of the literature review, the value of the Social Identity Theory and the Contact Hypothesis was discussed and criticized. It was also noted that there is generally a lack of theories pertaining to the influence of cultural perceptual styles on group perceptions and intergroup processes.

#### 8.1.4 Chapter 4: Review of the Empirical Literature

Chapter four consists of a discussion of the existing research on intergroup perceptions and the variables that have been implicated in the perceptions of other cultural groups.

It was noted that there is a lack of research pertaining to Individualism and Collectivism in South Africa, and no studies have investigated the influence of Individualism and Collectivism on the perceptions of one's own and other cultural groups. A review of the attitude studies in South Africa highlights the influence of cultural and language group memberships and identifications in the perceptions and attitudes of one's own and other cultural groups. These studies suggest that intergroup attitudes are widely and consistently held amongst members of particular cultural groups. Contact with members of other cultural groups have also been implicated in the perceptions of one's own and other cultural groups in South Africa. Generally, it has been found that contact may produce both positive and negative effects. A shortcoming of previous attitude studies in South Africa is that these studies tend to focus on the perceptions of single ethno-cultural groups towards other out-groups, and the cultural perceptual processes underlying these attitudes have been ignored.

**In conclusion**, it is noted that there is generally a lack of research on Individualism and Collectivism in South Africa, and a lack of local and international studies on the effects of cultural perceptual processes, such as those of Individualism and Collectivism, on group attitudes. In addition, existing research in South Africa has generally ignored the interrelation between group attitudes by focusing on the perceptions of single ethno-cultural groups.

#### 8.1.5 Chapter 5: Research Methodology

In chapter five, the methods used in this study are introduced. This includes a description of each of the **data collection tools, the samples, the procedures, the statistical analysis of the data, and the ethical procedures**. To concur with what has already been mentioned in chapter one, with regards to the problem statement of the study, it appears that there is a need to investigate perceptions of cultural groups amongst students, and the related variables that influence these perceptions.

In view of the problem statement, the research aims incorporating certain objectives were put forth in terms of altogether **six hypotheses** for each of the variables studied. **Three postulates** for the construct validity of the IS/CS and the SDS attitude scales were also provided.

The **research design** of this study represented a quantitative survey positioned within a positivist paradigm. The survey was conducted by means of a self-administered questionnaire. A sample of altogether 541 respondents was compiled. This sample included both male and female volunteer participants from first-and second-year psychology courses. The sample was characteristic of students from a broad range of language and cultural-orientation groups and of various age groups, faculties and year of study. A detailed description pertaining to the study population characteristics is illustrated in tables of findings in chapter 5.

The **research instruments** utilized in this study were the **Semantic Differential Scale (Nieuwoudt, 1973)** pertaining to the perceptions of each cultural group included in the questionnaire, and the **Individualism and Collectivism Scales (Gudykunst, 1995)**. The SDS consisted of 20 bipolar items, each consisting of a pair of opposite adjectives or adverbs. A seven-point scale was used by the participants to evaluate a particular group in terms of each adjectival or adverbial pair. The overall attitude score for each SDS pertaining to each of the five cultural-orientation groups separately was the sum of the scores for each item pair.

The **IS/CS** consisted of a shortened version of the original Triandis et al. (1990) scale. This provided a 20-item Likert-Scale consisting of ten items for each dimension. A seven-point rating scale was used by the respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the value statements. The scores for each of the items were added to provide a separate score for each dimension. The questionnaires were completed within a controlled classroom setting under the supervision of the researcher and the study supervisor. The survey was conducted in an ethically appropriate manner.

To provide an indication of the **reliability** of the IS and CS and the five SDS, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were computed for each dependent measure separately. The **construct validity** of each scale was determined by conducting a factor analysis on the scores for the total sample. The **statistical techniques** that were utilized consisted of independent t-tests for the comparisons of the IS and CS scores and the SDS attitude scores of the male and female respondents, and the resident and non-resident respondents. ANOVA and post-hoc tests were utilized in the comparisons of the scores for the five cultural-orientation groups, and the three language groups. Levene's test was also utilized to provide an indication of the equality (homogeneity) of variance of the dependent variables across the groups. The inter-relation between the IS and CS scores and each of the five SDS attitude scores were established by means of Pearson productmoment correlations.

## 8.1.6 Chapter 6: Results

In chapter six the **results of all statistical analyses** pertaining to the research hypotheses were indicated in tables of findings. Firstly, the descriptive statistics and the results pertaining to the reliability and validity of the dependent measures were discussed. Secondly, the results of the IS and CS scores, and the SDS attitude scores were presented separately for each independent variable. Finally, the correlations between the value and attitude scores were presented.

### 8.1.6.1 The psychometric characteristics of the research instruments

The results of the factor analyses for each dependent measure were significant, since more than 50% of the total variance for each scale was explained by a single factor, and not more than one major factor. The **reliability** of the principal factors for each scale demonstrated a relatively high consistency of measurement. Thus, **postulates 1.1, 1.2, and 2**, with regards to the **construct validity of the IS and CS**, and the **five Semantic Differential scales (SDS)** were accepted.

### 8.1.6.2 Group comparisons for the IS and CS scores

In summary, statistically significant differences were recorded for the comparisons of the IS and CS scores for each independent variable included in the analysis.

#### 8.1.6.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Differences between male and female respondents

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 1**, with regard to the **comparisons of the IS and CS scores of male and female respondents**, was rejected. A statistically stronger IS and CS score amongst the female respondents in comparison with the male respondents was indicated.

#### 8.1.6.2.2 Hypothesis 2: Differences between the resident and day-students

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 2**, with regard to the IS scores **of the resident and the day-students** was not rejected. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>)** was rejected for the comparisons of the CS scores of the resident and day-students. The day-students indicated a statistically stronger CS score than the resident students.

#### 8.1.6.2.3 Hypothesis 3: Differences between the five cultural-orientation groups

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 3**, with regard to **the IS scores of the five cultural-orientation groups**, was rejected for the comparison of the Indian/Asian group and the Westernised-African group. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** was not rejected for the comparisons of the other cultural-orientation groups. A statistically stronger IS score was indicated by the Indian/Asian cultural group in comparison with the Westernised-African group.

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 3**, with regard to the **CS scores of the five cultural-orientation groups**, was rejected for the comparisons between the Indian/Asian group with each of the other four cultural-orientation groups, and the comparisons between the Western-English and Westernised-African groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** was not rejected for the comparisons between each of the other cultural-orientation groups. The Indian/Asian group indicated a statistically stronger CS score in comparison with each of the other cultural -orientation groups. The Western-English group indicated a statistically stronger CS score than the Westernised-African group.

#### 8.1.6.2.4 Hypothesis 4: Differences between the three home language groups

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 4**, with regard to the **IS and CS scores of the three language groups**, was rejected for the comparisons of the African and English language groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)** was not rejected for the comparisons between the Afrikaans and the African language groups, and between the Afrikaans and English language groups. The results indicated that the English language group had a statistically stronger IS and CS score than the African language group.

#### 8.1.6.3 Group comparisons for the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups

In general, significant differences were indicated for the comparisons of the SDS attitude scores in terms of each independent variable.

#### 8.1.6.3.1 Hypothesis 1: Differences between male and female respondents

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 1**, with regard to the **SDS attitude scores of the male and female respondents**, was rejected for the **perceptions of the Indian/Asian cultural group**. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>)** was not rejected for the perceptions of the other cultural -orientation groups. The female respondents, in comparison with the male respondents, indicated a statistically more favourable perception of the Indian/Asian cultural group.

#### 8.1.6.3.2 Hypothesis 2: Differences between resident and day-students

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 2**, with regard to the **SDS attitude scores of resident and day-students**, was rejected for the **perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans and Indigenous African cultural groups**. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>)** was not rejected for the perceptions of the other cultural-orientation groups. A statistically more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group and a statistically less favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group were indicated by the resident students in comparison with the day-students.

#### 8.1.6.3.3 Hypothesis 3: Differences between the five cultural-orientation groups

In general, the **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 3**, with regard to the **SDS attitude scores of the five cultural-orientation groups**, was rejected for the **perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans, Western-English and Indigenous African cultural groups**. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)** was not rejected for the perceptions of the Indian/Asian and Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups.

The Western-Afrikaans group indicated a statistically more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group in comparison with the Indigenous African, Middle-Eastern (Muslim)/Asian and Western-English groups. The Western-English group indicated a statistically more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group than the Indigenous African group. The Westernised-African group indicated a statistically more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group than the Indian/Asian and Indigenous African groups.

The Western-English group indicated a significantly more favourable perception of the Western-English cultural group than the Indian/Asian and the Western-Afrikaans groups. The Indigenous African group indicated a significantly more favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group than each of the other cultural-orientation groups.

#### 8.1.6.3.4 Hypothesis 4: Differences between the three language groups

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 4**, with regard to the **SDS attitude scores of the three language groups**, was rejected for the **perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans, Western-English and Indigenous African cultural groups**. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>4</sub>)** was not rejected for the perceptions of the Indian/ Asian and the Middle-Eastern (Muslim) cultural groups.

The Afrikaans group indicated a statistically more favourable perception of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group in comparison with the English and the African language groups. The English group indicated a statistically more favourable perception of the Western-English cultural group in comparison with the Afrikaans group. The African language group indicated a statistically more favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group in comparison with the Afrikaans and the English language groups, and the English group indicated a significantly more favourable perception of the Indigenous African cultural group in comparison with the Afrikaans group.

#### 8.1.6.4 The correlations between the IS and CS scores, and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups.

The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>5</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 5**, was not rejected for the correlations between the IS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans and Western-English cultural groups. The **null-hypothesis (Ho<sub>6</sub>)** in reference to **hypothesis 6**, was rejected for the correlations between the CS scores and the perceptions of the Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Indigenous African cultural groups. Statistically significant, low correlations were indicated for the correlations between the CS scores and the perceptions of the Western-English, Indian/Asian, Middle-Eastern (Muslim) and Indigenous African cultural groups.

#### 8.1.7 Chapter 7: Discussion of the research findings

In chapter seven, the research findings are discussed in an integral fashion by taking into account the important aspects pertaining to the literature review and the results of chapter six. For this purpose, the research findings regarding the postulates and each of the hypotheses were discussed, followed by an outline of the practical limitations of the study.



### 8.1.7.1 The psychometric characteristics of the research instruments

The results of the factor analyses for each dependent measure were significant since more than 50% of the total variance for each scale was explained by a single factor, and not more than one major factor. The reliability of the principal factors for each scale demonstrated a relatively high consistency of measurement. Thus, **postulates 1.1, 1.2, and 2** with regards to the construct validity of the IS and CS, and the Semantic Differential scales (SDS) were accepted.

### 8.1.7.2 Group comparisons of the IS and CS scores

In summary, the results of the **IS and CS scores for each Independent variable** appear to suggest the influence of specific response tendencies, for example, acquiescence and social desirability response sets, on the participants' responses. Strong, positively skewed ratings for both dimensions were observed, suggesting that the respondents may have endorsed the items without due consideration of the content of the items. This response tendency was particularly prominent for the female respondents as well as the Indian/Asian cultural groups, suggesting that certain groups were more prone to acquiescence and social desirability response sets. The skewed responses indicate certain methodological limitations with regard to the specific Individualism and Collectivism scales, and the rating procedures used within the present study. On the basis of these findings, it was decided that the group comparisons of the IS and CS scores for each independent variable was most probably inconclusive.

### 8.1.7.3 Group comparisons of the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of each of the five cultural-orientation groups

It would appear that the very real social stratifications and socio-political discrimination still present in South Africa may be leading to interesting results with respect to the assessment of the perceptions of the broad cultural-orientation groups. The assessment of the **SDS attitude scores, in terms of the independent variables** included in the analysis, suggest that issues of cultural group identity and cultural group memberships play an important role in the perceptions of the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa. These results also provide support for the relevant aspects of the Social Identity Theory which state that in-groups will generally be perceived as being more favourable than out-groups. The Social Identity Theory hypothesises that individuals from low status, previously disadvantaged social groups will apply strategies of social mobility, creativity or change to enhance their social identities. In the case of groups that have realistically experienced oppression, the strategy of social

mobility appears most apt, and members of these groups are likely to show attempts to psychologically associate with advantaged groups. This idea is supported by the results of the SDS attitudes of the Westernised-African group who identified themselves with a Western cultural-orientation group and indicated significantly less favourable ratings of the Indigenous African cultural group and more favourable ratings of the Western cultural groups in comparison with the Indigenous African group.

The SDS results in terms of the variables of cultural-orientation and language group correspond with those of previous studies in South Africa. These findings provide strong support for the relative stability and consistency of cultural group attitudes in South Africa.

#### **8.1.7.4 Correlations between the IS and CS, and the SDS attitude scores**

The correlation of the IS and CS scores with the SDS attitude scores, for the perceptions of the five cultural-orientation groups, did not conform to the predicted outcomes. It was predicted that the correlations between the IS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the two Western cultural groups and the correlations between the CS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the perceptions of the three Non-Western cultural groups, would be statistically significant. The rationale for this expectation was based on the assumption that the perceptions of Western cultural groups are relative to the type of perceptual styles that predominate in Western cultures, viz. Individualism, and that the perceptions of Non-Western cultural groups are relative to the perceptual styles that predominate in Non-Western cultures, viz. Collectivism.

The findings of the present investigation did not support this assumption. The correlations of the IS and CS scores with the SDS attitude scores for the five cultural-orientation groups were partially in accordance with the theoretical expectations. In general, low correlations were indicated for the IS and CS scores and the SDS attitude scores for the five cultural-orientation groups. It was felt that the weak correlations between the dependent measures was largely due to the inconclusive results of the IS and CS scores. It was also suggested that the specific individualistic and collectivistic attributes that were used in the present study were too general to predict attitudes relating to the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa.

## 8.2 Recommendations

### 8.2.1 Recommendations for intervention strategies

The findings indicated in the present study suggest a number of recommendations for intervention strategies aimed at the improvement of intergroup relations amongst students in South Africa.

The results of this study show that cultural identifications and group memberships play an important role in the formation of group perceptions. It may thus be valuable for possible intervention strategies aimed at the improvement of intergroup relations to concentrate on encouraging identifications on another level that cuts across cultural distinctions. The creation of super-ordinate, common categories that are relevant to students of all cultural groups may reduce the salience of in-group/ out-group distinctions.

The less favourable perceptions of the Indigenous African cultural group, as perceived by the four out-groups, and the less favourable perceptions of the Western-Afrikaans cultural group, as perceived by the Indigenous African group, suggest that interventions should be aimed at improving the relations between these groups and reducing negative stereotyping of the other culture group.

### 8.2.2 Recommendations for future research

In view of the results and the limitations of the research, certain recommendations have been provided.

An apparent difficulty throughout this study has been the paucity of adequate measurement of the Individualistic and Collectivistic orientations. The positively skewed distribution of the IS and CS scores suggest that certain changes are needed with regard to the specific IS and CS items and the rating procedures used in the present study. In this regard, it may be useful for future research to include specific dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism that are relevant to the South African context, and to assess the reliability and validity of the scale items across the respective cultural groups. It may also be necessary to include a wider rating scale to allow for a greater degree of variability in the responses.

The IS and CS scores for each of the five cultural-orientation groups suggested the influence of cultural response tendencies amongst the groups in the present study. Future research should thus take adequate steps to check for cultural response sets and to control for them if necessary.

In light of the emphasis on the importance of cultural variability in social behaviour and group-orientations indicated in the literature, examination of the influence of specific cultural dimensions of

variability amongst the broad cultural-orientation groups in South Africa and their relation to group perceptions, may be valuable for understanding intergroup relations amongst the South African population.

The low correlations between the IS and CS scores, and the SDS attitudes scores in the present study are not in support of the influence of general cultural-orientations on group attitudes. In view of the limitations of the IS and CS items utilised in the present study, it was suggested that the low correlations between the attitude and value scores were largely due to the skewed distribution of the IS and CS scores. It was also suggested that the IS and CS items in the present study were too abstract for the prediction of specific group attitudes. In this regard, it may be valuable for future research, focusing on group attitudes, to select specific attributes of Individualism and Collectivism, or to identify other dimensions of cultural variability relating to group-orientations and intergroup behaviour.

It is also important to note that Individualism and Collectivism are merely one of many value domains that are likely to influence social perception. Future intergroup attitude research may benefit from using multi-dimensional value scales.

One of the main objectives of this study was to identify the relation between dimensions of cultural variability (Individualism and Collectivism) and group attitudes. This study was limited by the fact that the respondents were all university students who are relatively exposed to the same type of values within the university environment, and who have achieved a certain level of education. It is therefore likely that the groups within the present study would not show considerable variability in terms of underlying core values. It is thus valuable for future research to include samples of non-university students from different sectors of society in order to allow for more variability in terms of core cultural values and perceptual styles.