Chapter 2

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Chapter 2 Overview

1) Origins and General History of African-Centered Psychology

2) Six psychologists that contributed to the study of the “Africentric Worldview”

3) Broad Examination of African Philosophy

4) African Centered Research

5) Afrocentric Scales

6) Discussion
Review of African-Centered Psychology

• Rooted in African Culture

• Based on philosophical assumptions of people of African descent

• Relatively recent and new field of psychology

• Emphasis on emotion, spirituality and community

• European-style Psychology focused on a rigid and scientific approach, opposed to African-Centered Psychology which is more organic.
A worldview is a way of thinking that organizes all aspects of one’s life.

Examination of intra- and interpersonal thoughts and behaviors.

Provide guidelines for living and a framework for interpreting events and understanding the world.

Africentric Worldview focuses on the lives and mindsets of the African People.
African American Psychologists

• Joseph White
  o Challenged the use of traditional theories and frameworks to study African Americans.
  o “It is very difficult, if not impossible, to understand the lifestyle of Black people using traditional theories developed by White psychologists to explain White people. Moreover, when these traditional theories are applied to lives of black folks many incorrect, weakness-dominated, and inferiority oriented conclusions come about.”

• Asa Hilliard
  o Developed unbiased testing systems in schools
  o Believed the teaching of Black psychology must include an understanding of ancient African civilization
• Wade Nobles
  o Contributed to our understanding of several aspects of African philosophy
  o Focused studies on the conceptualization of the self from an African centered perspective
  o Recently created African-centered programs that address problems like substance abuse and HIV Prevention

• Na’im Akbar
  o Focused his studies on the effects of oppression on African Americans
  o *Alien-self disorder* and *anti-self disorder* result from individuals functioning within an alien environment.
• Kobi K. K. Kambon (Joseph Baldwin)
  o Focused his study on African personality
  o Developed the African Self-Consciousness Scale (ASC)
  o Cultural Misorientation (2003)

• Linda James Myers
  o Developed the *Optimal Worldview Theory*
  o Believes the dominant Eurocentric worldview places too much importance on the acquisition of material objects.
African Philosophy

• Holistic in nature

Africentric Dimensions

• Spirituality
• Collectivism
• Time Orientation
• Orality
• Sensitivity to Affect and Emotional Cues
• Verve and Rhythm
• Balance and Harmony with Nature
Aspects of Africentric Psychology

- Ma’at
- Maafa
- Veneration of the Person
- Spiritness
- Human Authenticity
- Inclusive Metaphysical Epistemology
African-Centered Research

- African-centered psychology is growing over past 40 years
- Studies
  - Examined differences between African-Americans and European Americans on Africentric worldview dimensions
  - Examined relationships between Africentric worldview and racial identity, self-esteem, mental health, and drug use.
Africentric Beliefs and Other Variables

Africentric worldview constructs have been associated with...
1. Racial Identity
2. Academic Attitudes
3. Self-Esteem
4. Drug Attitudes & Use
Methods of Study

2. Semaj’s points (1996)
African Self-Consciousness Scale

- Developed by Baldwin (aka Kambon) to assess the dimensions of Black personality

- Focuses on self extension and communal orientation

- 42 items such as “I don’t necessarily feel like I am also being mistreated in a situation where I see another Black person being mistreated

- 1-8 Likert scale grading with high scores representing stronger African self-consciousness
Afrocentricity is a science… Science must be supported by reason and evidence

Three main dimensions:

1) Cultural centeredness: “If someone from my race is treated unfairly, everyone in my race has been treated unfairly”

2) Spirituality and ancestral connection: “My spirit is connected to all things in the universe”

3) Afrocentric epistemology: “An important source of knowledge and truth for me is my ancestors culture and traditions”
The Communalism Scale

- Assesses the Africentric dimension of communalism

- Examines how connected the participant with others in his or her family, community, and other environments.

- Associates interdependence with cooperation, shared interests and activities, and concern for others
Africentrism Based on Nguzo Saba’s Principles

- Focused on assessing the principles of Nguzo Saba

Seven principles of Nguzo Saba:
1) Umoja: maintaining **unity** in family, community, nation and race
2) Kujichagulia: Define, name, create for, and **speak** for ourselves
3) Ujima: **Sharing** problems as a community, and solving them together
4) Ujamaa: **Own** our own businesses and profit through them together
5) Nia: **Purpose**, develop community and restore greatness Black people
6) Kuumba: **Creativity**, to leave one’s community better than it was received
7) Imani: **Faith** in fellow Black people, parents, teachers, and victory in struggle
Africentric Value Scale for Children

- Tests strength of Africentric beliefs in children

- Children (9-14) are ego centered = less communal and “spiritual”

- Tests children’s belief in collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, and self-determination
- Assesses racial socialization in the home, which is the most influential aspect of a child’s (<5)
  - Do Africentric messages conveyed in one’s home increase one’s inclination to adopt Africentric beliefs? The AHEI assesses these messages conveyed at home

- Examined things such as: Prevalence of Black artwork, African American toys and books, family’s subscription to African American magazines, etc.

- Turns out the AHEI displays a significant correlation with a racial socialization scale
Discussion Questions

• Does infusing Africentric beliefs in children increase their receptivity to these beliefs?

• Alien-self disorder is when individuals behave in ways that are different from their natural disposition as a result of attempting to function within an alien environment. Should this behavior be considered a disorder?